LIBERTY AND EQUALITY;

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A CLERGYMAN AND HIS PARISHIONER.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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LIBERTY and EQUALITY;

A

DIALOGUE.

Clergyman. GOod-morrow, Richard; whither are you hurrying ſo faſt?

Pariſhioner. Pleaſe your reverence, I am going to town to attend a meeting of the Friends of the People.

Cler. What do you ſay, friend?

Par. I have got notice to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Friends of the People. There are ſome papers received from our foreign correſpondents, and our Preſident tells us, if we wiſh to be enlightened, we ought always to be preſent on ſuch occaſions.

Cler. I confeſs you aſtoniſh me!—Many years have I known you an honeſt induſtrious man, attentive to the intereſts of your family, and diſpoſed to live quietly and ſoberly, as becomes a Chriſtian, and a good citizen, never meddling in matters beyond your ſphere; but now, departing from your uſual prudence and caution, you have embarked in a cauſe, and joined a fraternity, which will certainly prove your ruin.

Par. How can that be, Sir?—Our Society, and all others of the ſame kind throughout the kingdom, have no other end in view than to ſave the nation. Is not that a fine thing now? To ſave the nation! only think of that! and ſurely if we can accompliſh it, will it not be the making of me and my family?

Cler. I will be glad to know how that is to be done.

Par. Done, Sir! Why, our preſident tells us nothing is more ſimple and eaſy.—We have nothing to do but to plant the Tree of Liberty, I think they call it, which will make us all *equal*, and then I ſhall be as great as a lord.—For you know we cannot work

for nothing. If we reform the government, and ſet the nation free, we muſt be paid for our trouble. As our preſident ſays, We are ſtate-phyſicians, and phyſicians, you know, muſt have their fees.

Cler. I ſee, neighbour, you are a very apt ſcholar, and that your preſident's lectures have not been thrown away upon you:—If all men were equal, to be ſure you would be as great as a lord; but that would be owing to his being brought down to your level, not to your being raiſed to his dignity. Therefore, you ſee, his lordſhip would loſe much, but you would gain nothing.—The promiſes held out to you, and to others like you, by thoſe who have, upon very bad grounds indeed, aſſumed the title of *Friends of the People*, are preciſely of the ſame nature with the lying oracles, with which the devil uſed to blind, miſlead, and deſtroy the ancient Heathens.——A great King, who wiſhed to make war againſt another powerful prince, ſent to conſult a famous oracle, Whether he ſhould ſucceed in his enterpriſe? The devil anſwered, that when he advanced to a certain place with his army, he ſhould deſtroy a mighty empire. The king flattered himſelf that this could mean nothing elſe but the deſtruction of that empire againſt which he was marching, and which he would add to his own dominions. But when he reached the place appointed, he was attacked by his enemy, his army was defeated, and himſelf taken priſoner, and condemned to be burnt alive; which ſhewed him, when too late, that the devil had deceived him, and that the mighty empire he was to deſtroy was no other than his own.

Par. What better could he expect from conſulting the devil? But the caſe is different with the Friends of the People; for they have their information from perſons who are well acquainted with the ſtate of affairs; and we know that the nation is not ſo well governed as it would be, were it left to us and our friends.

Cler. The King I ſpoke of did not conſult his oracle believing it to be an evil ſpirit, but a god who was able to aſſiſt him, and whom he endeavoured to bribe for that purpoſe with the richeſt gifts; but when he had made the experiment, he found his oracle had lied unto him, and made a dupe of him. And for any thing you know this may be the caſe with you and the reſt of the people, ſhould your great friends ſucceed in bringing about their pretended reform. We need not indeed have recourſe to any oracle to convince us of that, for the hiſtory of our own country holds out the miſerable effects of former revolutions, as warnings to us not to repeat the experiment.

Par. Pleaſe your reverence, had they formerly the ſame reaſons for a reform that we have now?

Cler.

Cler. They pretended ſo.——A party was formed againſt King Charles the Firſt, under the plauſible and popular pretence of procuring redreſs of the national grievances.——The good king liſtened to their complaints, and gave them all the ſatisfaction they deſired; and one who reads the hiſtory of that period would be at a loſs to know, whether the king was more ready to yield his undoubted prerogative, or his factious ſubjects to rob him of it. The more he gave, the more they wiſhed to take: and the royal indulgence, inſtead of pleaſing his enemies, and doing good to the nation, only ſtrengthened their hands, and enabled them to ruin the kingdom. After every thing had been granted to them, they inſiſted that he ſhould ſet aſide the eſtabliſhed Religion. The Church revenues were too tempting not to enflame their avarice. The king reſiſted this demand from a principle of conſcience, well knowing that religion is the ſafeguard of every nation, that it is the peculiar duty of princes to protect it, and that ſacrilege is ſooner or later followed by the divine vengeance.——His reſiſtance proved ineffectual.——His enemies had become too powerful for him, and he abandoned the Church to them; which he never ceaſed to lament, and for which he never could forgive himſelf to the day of his death.—He had often occaſion to prove, that when he loſt the ſupport of the Church he loſt the beſt gem in his crown, and the nation the beſt prop of its liberties; for from the day the Church was deſtroyed, neither the king nor the nation proſpered.

Par. What could the people mean in making ſuch unreaſonable demands, or in not being ſatisfied with the king's indulgence?

Cler. The people!——It was not the people who made theſe demands, but a faction who called themſelves the people's *friends*.——The people, who in general are honeſt and well meaning, were made the dupes of thoſe who ſaw their intereſt in plundering the Church, and in robbing the king of his power. This was the great end of all their pretended patriotiſm.——After having carried on war for ſeveral years againſt the King, they got him into their hands by treachery, kept him a cloſe priſoner for ſome time, though all the while they were giving him good words, and promiſed to make a glorious king of him. This they were not long in doing. They murdered him on a ſcaffold, and ſent him to receive a crown of glory, for which he had been long fitted by a piety, juſtice, charity, meekneſs, patience, fortitude and forbearance that would have done honour to a primitive martyr. This ended the ſufferings of the unfortunate monarch, but not the oppreſſion of the nation. For many years

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it had ſuffered all the horrors that could ariſe from a rebellion ſo monſtrous and unprovoked.—Trade was deſtroyed, agriculture neglected; towns were beſieged, ſtormed and plundered, and many of the inhabitants put to the ſword or executed; thouſands were ſlain in battle, and multitudes murdered in cold blood; the greateſt families brought to ruin; and the moſt wealthy reduced to indigence and miſery.——All this was done to make a glorious king of their ſovereign, and England a happy kingdom; or in plain Engliſh it was done to gratify the avarice and ambition of wicked men, who, after the king's murder, could not agree among themſelves about the power.——The government was continually changing its form, and going from one hand to another, till after many years oppreſſion, the nation, not able to endure it longer, called home the ſon of their murdered ſovereign, and reſtored the ancient government in church and ſtate.——I aſk you now, my friend, Would it be a deſirable thing to the ſober part of the nation to ſee their religion, their commerce, and their deareſt privileges ſacrificed again under the ſtale pretence of redreſſing grievances which do not exiſt, and which, though they did exiſt, would be a thouſand times more tolerable than the tyranny of a Rump Parliament, an Oliver Cromwell, or a military government?——Could any grievances, which could ariſe in a government like ours, be equal to the horrors of a country deluged with blood, and plundered by every ruffian who could weild a poignard?

Par. No indeed.—No good man could think of ſuch crimes, or of his country being ſo miſerably oppreſſed, without horror.—Never could he wiſh for a revolution on ſuch terms. But what reaſon can there be for fearing ſuch evils now? What intereſt can the Friends of the People have in the ruin of their country?

Cler. Pray, what intereſt had Oliver Cromwell? What intereſt had all the regicides and tyrants, or the inferior ruffians employed as their inſtruments in the treaſons, murders and robberies committed in the reign of King Charles the Firſt? Juſt the ſame intereſt have the friends of the people now; and juſt the ſame intereſt will ſuch men ever have to the end of the world, who diſturb the peace of their country, and want to overturn the government under the pretence of reforming abuſes. Do you ſuppoſe that they are ſuch fools as to avow their real deſign? That would be the ſure way to defeat it.—Were they to tell you that they wiſhed to kill the king, to baniſh or behead the nobility and clergy, to deſtroy religion of every kind, and to diſpoſe of all the property of the kingdom as they thought fit, they would be brought to immediate puniſhment, as traitors to their king and country, and they would

frighten

frighten the people from joining them, without whose assistance they cannot go to work.——It is for that reason they cajole you.——They terrify you with plausible but false accounts of the ruined state of the kingdom; they flatter you with specious promises of happiness and prosperity beyond what the nation ever enjoyed, and then they think you will be as great fools as they are knaves, and rise in a body and execute their wicked designs.

Par. I should be glad to know what proof there is that such are the intentions of the reforming societies?

Cler. What proof would satisfy you?

Par. That they had taken some steps which naturally tended to sedition, or to disturb the peace and security of the kingdom.

Cler. Do you approve of what the French have done? Or would you wish to see this kingdom reduced to the same condition with France?

Par. Your reverence may as well ask me if I approve of *treason, rebellion, murder, robbery,* and the blackest crimes that ever were hatched in hell; or if I would like to see the people of Great Britain possessed with ten thousand legions of devils!

Cler. My friend, I would not wish to give you offence, but I put the question, because it naturally leads to this conclusion; As the French principles are in direct opposition to every precept of religion and morality, therefore they are destructive of the happiness of every nation that embraces them; and as the ruin of France has been owing to those principles, therefore the state of that kingdom cannot be proposed as a model to any other kingdom by those that wish well to it.——Now the Clubs which have associated under the pretence of being friends to the people, and of reforming the abuses of government, approved of the French revolution; kept up a correspondence with those that have embrued their hands in the blood of their lawful sovereign, and of the peaceable, moderate and virtuous part of their fellow citizens; sent delegates to congratulate the French rulers on their having overturned the government of their country; and have often recommended the French principles, as well as printed, and dispersed throughout the kingdom, such writings as had no other tendency than to stir up sedition. Many of these *friends of the people,* conscious of their crimes, have fled to France to screen themselves from the vengeance of the law, elated with the hope of making that conspicuous figure among men of their own stamp, which they never could have done at home, but they have either sunk into their primitive insignificance, or have been banished from their beloved land of equality, or sent to grace a prison, by those true philosophers whom no ties can bind, and whose virtue, like the

song

ſong of the fabled Siren, is only to ſoothe thoſe whom they mean to deſtroy.———From ſuch proofs of the real deſign of thoſe liberty clubs we are ſufficiently warranted to apprehend the worſt; for he that extols the ſtate of France muſt be ſuppoſed to wiſh this country reduced to the ſame condition.

Par. Why to be ſure that is true; and I confeſs there may be more danger than ſome people are willing to allow.—But I do not form my opinion of the ſtate of the nation from pamphlets alone.—There is our Preſident, your Reverence, whom I always believed to be a very honeſt man; to be ſure he is a little given to tippling, but he ſays a great deal about the heavy taxes, and tells us as how we ſhould have better and cheaper drink were it not for the corruptions of the ſtate. Beſides, I am acquainted with ſome ſhopkeepers who ſay that trade will be ruined, and no man will be able to live by his calling!

Cler. Should any one come to you and tell you that you are not at liberty to till your farm, or that the taxes are ſo heavy you can make no profits of your crop, and that you are obliged to carry your corn to any market, and ſell it at any price, the government pleaſes, what would you think?

Par. Why, what ſhould I think, but that the perſon who ſpoke to me was either a fool or a knave? There would not be one word of truth in all he had ſaid.

Cler. The caſe is juſt the ſame with every other occupation in the kingdom.—You do not find perſons of real unaffected piety crying out that religion is perſecuted. You do not hear the landed gentlemen complain that their property is not ſecured by the law, or that they pay too heavy taxes, although they pay in proportion to their wealth. You do not meet with merchants and manufacturers, who really are the ſupporters of the national commerce, exclaiming againſt the government for not protecting trade, or for crippling it by enormous taxes———Yet theſe are the claſſes of men who, of all others, would have the beſt right to complain of the corruptions of government, and who certainly would complain, were there any cauſe for it. But all the complaints you hear come from thoſe, who from principle (for wicked men have a principle of their own as well as the good) are enemies to Church and State, and who would be enemies to any Church or State, whoſe emoluments they were not allowed to enjoy.—Nay, they are not aſhamed to confeſs it. The enemies of the Church cry out that ſhe is too rich, and for that reaſon wiſh to have the plundering of her———They are equally diſpleaſed with the ſtate, becauſe the king exerciſes the natural right, which you, and I, and every man in the kingdom exerciſes, of chuſing his own ſervants, and they are mad that he will not chuſe them

them, that they may make a glorious king of him, (may God long preſerve him!) as their brethren in England did of king Charles the firſt, and as their brethren in France have done of the unfortunate Louis.

Par. It is ſo ſhocking to think of ſuch crimes, that one would almoſt be tempted to believe ſuch wicked men did not exiſt. Yet one muſt believe what he ſees with his own eyes; and the enormities we hear of will naturally lead us to ſuſpect the integrity of thoſe who cry out againſt the Church or State.

Cler. My friend, I do not ſay that every man who calls himſelf, or wiſhes to be thought, a friend to his country, is for that reaſon an enemy to it; but ſurely we can have no good opinion of the deſigns of thoſe, who are themſelves guilty of enormities as criminal as thoſe which they attribute to their rulers!——To what purpoſe does a man exclaim againſt the corruptions of an eſtabliſhed religion, who does all he can to ſap the foundation of all religion and morality, by combating the truth of a religion of which he calls himſelf a miniſter?—What ſort of Chriſtian miniſter muſt he be, who calls Chriſt an impoſtor, for ſo he does when he diſputes his divine nature?——Why does ſuch a man rail at the eſtabliſhed religion merely for its having revenues for the ſupport of its miniſters, while he endeavours all he can to get theſe revenues to his own ſect?——What has the nation to expect from the oeconomy of thoſe perſons who, while they declaim againſt the extravagance of their rulers, are ſpendthrifts themſelves?——If they cannot manage their own private fortunes, how can they be expected to manage the revenues of a great empire?——If they are turbulent ſubjects, ought we not to expect them to be tyrannical rulers?——It is a trite ſaying, but not the leſs true, He that would command muſt firſt learn to obey.—— If the great body of the people were to know the characters of thoſe who continually baul in their ears the ſins of their governours; and were they to be informed that the *Friends of the People*, as they are called, are neither the *great*, nor the *good*, nor the *learned*, nor the *rich*, nor the *induſtrious*, nor the *ſenſible*, nor even a *numerous*, part of the nation; but a few ſcattered clubs of *deluded*, or *poor*, or *ignorant*, or *idle* and *diſſipated* men, brought together by the ſupple agents of thoſe who aim at greater crimes than they dare avow; the empty and fallacious manifeſtoes with which they deluge the nation, would be ſpurned with the contempt and abhorrence becoming the good ſenſe and virtue of a great and generous people.

Par. I do not think indeed that the nation is ſo near to ruin as ſome people tell us.——We have ſtill a great trade, and therefore

I ſhould

I ſhould ſuppoſe able to pay taxes, whatever ſome of my acquaintance may ſay.

Cler. Our trade is ſo great, that there is no nation on earth can equal us in that reſpect; nay I believe I may ſafely ſay that the trade of Great Britain is almoſt eqnal to that of the reſt of Europe. And what is that owing to, but to thoſe excellent laws by which it is protected? Commerce muſt be cheriſhed with great care, and no government has paid ſo much attention to it as our own. The great revenue ariſing from trade is of itſelf an unanſwerable proof of its proſperity. Should any man, who enjoys the benefit of the commercial laws, and whoſe trade is cheriſhed by the foſtering care of our excellent government, endeavour to alter that government in order to be freed from taxes, (and the ſhopkeepers you ſpeak of are of that ſort) he would act exactly on the ſame principle with the boy who had the gooſe that laid every day a golden egg.—The boy thought, if he ſhould kill his gooſe, he would get all the gold at once, and ſave the expence of keeping; but the death of the gooſe was the end of his profits. He got no more golden eggs.——France has already played the part of this fooliſh boy; and ſhould we follow her example, and pull down our Conſtitution and deſtroy the Church, we ſhould, like her, have *no religion*, nor *trade*, nor *manufactures*, nor *agriculture*, nor *peace*, but a nation of *murderers* and *robbers*, who, as the ſole reward of their labours, would have *nakedneſs* and *famine*. But my friend, I forget that I am detaining you from your club.

Par. Sir, I know not how it is, but I feel a little ſick when you mention it. What you have been telling me does not recommend it to me; and yet could we not bring about *Liberty and Equality*, without doing all the miſchief you have been taking of?

Cler. No. It is impoſſible.——The *Liberty and Equality* which the *Friends of the People* aim at, cannot take place till all that miſchief has been done; till the government has been overturned, and the Conſtitution totally deſtroyed; and that cannot happen till the nation has been plundered, and the good and ſober part of the people murdered. For you need not expect that this great nation will quietly reſign their real liberty, and all their honours and riches, to an unprincipled and deſperate banditti, as was unfortunately done in France. I ſuppoſe if a robber was come to plunder your farm, and drive you from your houſe, under the pretence that all men are equal, and that he had as good a right to them as yourſelf, you would not tamely ſubmit to it?

Par. Would I! I would defend them to the laſt drop of my blood.

Cler. And why ſhould not the reſt of the nation do the ſame?

ſame?——Are they not all Engliſhmen as well as you?—Are they not the ſons of thoſe wiſe men who framed the Conſtitution of our country, which has been long the wonder and envy of the world? I tell you what it is, friend, no man who is born in this country will ever lift a ſacrilegious hand againſt the venerable fabric of our Conſtitution, till he has forgot that he is an Engliſhman, or has rendered himſelf unworthy of that glorious name by his vices.——And I know no vice of ſo deep a dye as that of introducing *Equality* into any nation; which I ſhall demonſtrate to you, if you will poſtpone your viſit to the club, for I wiſh to ſhew you the folly and danger of being a member of a Society inſtituted for ſo wicked a purpoſe.

Par. I will be glad to hear what your Reverence has to ſay. I confeſs I was much taken with the flattering accounts of *Equality* which our preſident read to us from ſome of the pamphlets ſent to us by our friends; but after all, I would rather be what I am, than be in France at preſent.

Cler. Richard, my profeſſion does not lead me much to the ſtudy of politics, but a good deal to that of the holy ſcriptures, and of the various diſpenſations dealt out to the different nations of the earth in the courſe of the wiſe and juſt providence of God. I ſhall therefore talk with you more as a Chriſtian than a politician, and though I ſhall tell you ſome things which every politician does not believe, and lay down principles very different from thoſe which commonly direct the conduct of mankind, I ſhall ſay nothing but what is taught in the word of God, which is a much ſurer guide, even with regard to government, than the maxims of ſtateſmen, or the dictates of human paſſions; and as I am to ſpeak to you from the bible, I hope I ſhall not loſe my labour, for I have always found you inclined to be inſtructed in your Chriſtian duty.

Par. Sir, I would wiſh to do my duty as far as my underſtanding can direct me; for I know, if I tranſgreſs my duty to God, nothing in this world can give me any comfort.

Cler. Well then, I muſt frankly tell you, in oppoſition to all you have been taught at your liberty club, that *Equality* is only another name for *Atheiſm.*

Par. Atheiſm!—God forbid.—You are not ſerious, Sir?

Cler. Perfectly ſerious.—And I would not apply ſo harſh a name to any thing which an honeſt man like you had approved, if I did not think it deſerved it, and could not prove it. But I can prove it eaſily.

Par. Nay, Sir, you certainly muſt prove it; for I tremble to think I ſhould ever have embraced or countenanced an opinion which could deſerve ſo ill a name.

Cler. I ſee, Richard, you are not yet become one of the true *Sans Culottes.* You are not arrived at the pure patriotiſm which would paſs the ordeal of the French Jacobin club, and be applauded in the Convention.——If you were as hardened as their politics require, you would not be troubled with qualms of conſcience at the mention of atheiſm. The French patriots have fairly laid aſide all ſuch ſcruples, and now act as deliberately on atheiſtical principles, as it formerly was the practice to invoke the bleſſing of heaven on the councils and enterprizes of nations.——As atheiſm has been the natural and moſt forward fruit of their boaſted equality, ſo it is now frankly owned among them that equality can ſubſiſt among atheiſts only.——One of the members of the Convention, who is alſo a moſt zealous Jacobin, (*Anacharſis Klootz*, a fugitive Pruſſian) has lately publiſhed a book which he calls the *Univerſal Republic*, wherein he propoſes to form all the nations of the earth into one great republic, by making all men equal, and bringing them back to a ſtate of nature.——This he owns, however, cannot be done till mankind have got rid of all ſcruples of conſcience, and baniſhed every kind of religion from the world; ſo that this book, which no doubt ſpeaks the ſentiments of his brethren, may be conſidered as a manifeſto publiſhed by the atheiſtical rulers of France againſt Almighty God, and diſcovers clearly to us the infernal origin of their *Liberty and Equality.* Indeed it is ſo groſs an inſult to common decency, that the Monthly Reviewers, whoſe profeſſion it is to give the public an account of all the new books that come out, although they are no great friends either to Chriſtianity or Monarchy, cry ſhame upon the author!

Par. Good heavens! What will the world come to! How comes it, Sir, that theſe damnable doctrines of the French are not made known to us in our Clubs?—Are the *Friends of the People* ignorant of them, think you?

Cler. The truth is, the clubs that call themſelves the *Friends of the People* know well what is going on in France, but being more inclined to favour the French than to do their duty to their own country, they conceal every thing relative to the French that would hurt them in the opinion of the people here; and when they can get any circumſtance that appears favourable for them, they extol it, dwell upon it, and publiſh it in every way that can ſpread it through the kingdom, and impreſs it on the minds of the people.—But to convince you that we need not reſt the charge of atheiſm againſt the doctrine of equality entirely on the French declarations, which however ſufficiently prove it, I will ſhew you that it can be proved by other arguments.——What is Atheiſm?

Par.

Par. I think it is the diſbelief of the exiſtence, or providence of God.

Cler. Certainly. He that does not believe in the being of a God is an atheiſt; and he that does not allow of his providence, may as well deny his exiſtence. What do you mean by the providence of God?

Par. His government of the world.

Cler. And what do you underſtand by his government of the world?

Par. The laws and inſtitutions which he hath given unto men; and the proſperity and adverſity he deals out to the nations of the earth to reward their obedience, or to puniſh their rebellion.

Cler. Yes, my friend, that is the general providence by which Almighty God governs this lower world.——And from what you have told me I think we may infer, that to aboliſh any of the divine inſtitutions, is to oppoſe the providence of God, and may therefore be called Atheiſm.—For if we do not allow God to govern the world by whatever means he thinks fit, we may as well deny that he exiſts, at leaſt that he exiſts with reſpect to us. Do you not admit the truth of this?

Par. Sir, it is as clear as the ſun. I cannot deny it; and God forbid I ſhould ever be ſo great an enemy to myſelf as to deny ſo plain a truth!

Cler. What would you think then, if God, inſtead of making men *equal*, as you have lately been taught to believe, had made them quite the reverſe; had eſtabliſhed *inequality*, or a difference in rank, as the only means of preſerving peace and happineſs among men? If God did this, would it now be lawful for the lower claſſes in ſociety to level the higher, and bring mankind to an equality? Would it be lawful for ſubjects to dethrone and murder their Sovereigns, and to deſtroy that ſubordination by which order and regularity are preſerved in every nation?

Par. If God did not at firſt make men equal, to be ſure they cannot endeavour to make themſelves ſo, without being guilty of fighting againſt God.—For my own part, if your reverence can ſhew me from the bible that men were not equal at the beginning, I will ſooner put both my feet into the fire, than go again to ſuch meetings as I have lately attended.

Cler. That I ſhall eaſily do.——It has generally been received as a maxim, that whatever practice has in all ages prevailed in all nations, which was not ſinful in its nature, muſt have had a divine original.—On this maxim nothing can more eaſily be admitted to be divine than a difference in rank.—Almoſt all nations, if we look round the world at this day, have their kings, and all

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without exception, as far as we are acquainted with their ſtate, have their nobles, or great men, and under them various claſſes, all forming one great chain of connection, dependence and ſupport, from the ſupreme ruler of the nation to the meaneſt of his ſubjects. If in ſome nations we find no king, but the government to be of the republican kind, this is only one exception from the general rule of the whole earth, which does not ſet it aſide.—— Yet we do not find at this day, nor indeed in any age that ever went before, a ſingle example of a nation acting on the principle of equality, or where every man has an equal portion of power. The thing is in itſelf ſimply impoſſible, becauſe it is contrary to nature. In the republics which exiſt at preſent, and indeed in all others mentioned in hiſtory, there is always one perſon choſen as head of the nation; and whether he is choſen for life, or for ten years, or one year, he is to be conſidered during that period as king of the nation.—He is entruſted with more power than any other citizen.—He has duties to perform which no other citizen can or dares to fulfil. And he is choſen to act as head of the nation, merely from the impulſe of nature, which teaches men that as every body, political as well as natural, is compoſed of various members, ſo it muſt have a head to direct them in the proper exerciſe of their functions.——France is the only country which, in modern times, has attempted to form a government on the principle of equality, but ſhe has only amuſed her people with the theory of it, the practice being totally laid aſide. For inſtead of the French being all equal, they are more depreſſed, and in a worſe condition than ever they were, or any other people ever were under the moſt cruel tyrant. And though we ſhould admit the French government to to be founded on equality, and that its rulers did ſeriouſly mean to eſtabliſh that ſyſtem, it is to be conſidered at the beſt but as a monſter labouring for birth, and which is more likely to be ſtrangled in the ſtruggle, than to ſee the light.——The placing ſingle perſons at the head of republics, confirms the general rule that mankind cannot be governed but by *inequality*.——For if equality was natural, and therefore beſt, we ſhould find every republic, in which the ſyſtem of equality may moſt properly be expected, at the utmoſt pains to preſerve it.—But in all nations it is found from experience that men muſt be kept in ſubjection; and ſubjection means the inferiority and ſubmiſſion of one part of a nation to the other.—— However, when we look into the origin of all the republics that are at preſent, or ever were in the world, we find that they were once governed by Kings like other nations; that their firſt rulers were Kings; and that they did not become republics but by rebelling againſt their kings, who were either too weak, or too remote

mote from them, to keep them longer in ſubjection.——In ſhort, there is no example in any age or nation of the world, of the people being in that ſtate ſo much extolled by the French, and by thoſe reſtleſs ſpirits among ourſelves who wiſh to follow their example.

Par. Sir, I do not pretend to be acquainted with theſe matters, as I have not read hiſtory; but I know you would not aſſert any thing that you did not know to be true.

Cler. What I have told you is ſo well known to be true, that ſhould any man attempt to diſpute it, the world would look on him as mad or groſsly ignorant.——But was the ſtate of the different nations of the world unknown to one another; or was there no memorial of the government of the various nations in ancient times preſerved in hiſtory, to prove inequality, or difference in rank, to have ſubſiſted in all ages and nations; it might be proved from analogy to be the condition moſt natural to mankind.——There is no circumſtance which concerns the life of man in any other reſpect, that happens alike to every man; and why ſhould it happen in point of rank? There is a vaſt variety in the formation of the minds and bodies of men, and why may not a variety in their ſituation in the world be conſidered equally natural?—When we look on every hand of us, we find one man wiſe, and another fooliſh;—one with his bodily ſenſes perfect, and another in whom they are defective.—We ſee one man tall, and another ſhort; one white, and another black; one ſtrong, and another weak; one whole, and another ſick; one proſperous, and another unſucceſsful; and one rich, and another poor. Might we not therefore juſtly conclude that, ſince God had dealt out to mankind ſuch a variety in all thoſe particulars, he had alſo intended a difference equally remarkable with regard to their rank or order in ſociety, by making one high and another low?—To conclude (without looking into the ſtate of the world, as it is daily preſented to us, or repreſented in hiſtory to have been from the beginning) that God had really intended a difference in rank to ſubſiſt among men; and had ſet a bar, an invincible bar, the bar of natural bias, againſt equality; would be a juſt inference founded on the ſolid baſis of reaſon and common ſenſe; and which, to an attentive obſerver of human nature, would appear to require the aid of no other evidence.

Par. I confeſs, did the diſpute about Equality depend entirely upon argument, what you have ſaid would have great weight with me. Indeed I could offer no objection to it, arguing merely from the light of nature or reaſon. But we are, in a caſe of ſo great importance, to be guided by matter of fact; for I think

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God could not have left a matter of ſo much moment undetermined. Now as I have heard that equality was the firſt ſtate of man, that there is no true liberty where equality does not ſubſiſt, and therefore the tree of liberty ought to be planted in every nation, and that at any rate kings ſhould hold their crowns at the pleaſure of the people, who are their lords or ſovereigns; if you can ſhew me any thing from ſcripture that can clear up this point, it will make me very happy; for as the word of God is my infallible guide, I am reſolved to ſtick to that.

Cler. When I ſhewed you the univerſal practice of the nations throughout the earth in former times, and the general ſtate of government as it ſtands at preſent, and then pointed out the rule which reaſon itſelf would lay down with regard to the formation of ſociety, with which that univerſal practice has at all times correſponded, I did not mean to confine myſelf to theſe circumſtances as the only proof that mankind never were equal. For by going along the ſtreams, I intended to bring you to the fountain; and by ſhewing you the effects, to lead you to the cauſe.——Man is the creature of God, and can have no rights or privileges as his inheritance by nature, but thoſe that God conferred on him at his creation. Now as the rights of all men are mutually connected from their living in ſociety, the nature and extent of thoſe rights will depend on the ſtate which God intended men to live in with relation to one another.—You have lately been taught that all men were at firſt in every reſpect equal, and of courſe that they are born equal at this day; that their rights are taken from them, and their liberty impaired by thoſe that govern them, and that it is only by introducing equality again into ſociety that liberty can be reſtored; and for that end they ought to plant the "Tree of Liberty."

Par. Yes, Sir, that is what is ſaid.

Cler. My friend, can you tell me where this ſame tree of liberty firſt grew, and what kind of fruit it bears?

Par. The tree of liberty was firſt planted in France, and it produces equality among the people who receive it.

Cler. In France to be ſure the tree of liberty has made its firſt appearance in modern times; but it did not firſt grow there. It was not in France that the doctrine of all the people being kings was firſt preached. It began much earlier, and in a very different place; in no other place indeed than Paradiſe.

Par. Paradiſe!—Is it ſo old as that?—Then the French are more in the right than I was beginning to ſuppoſe.

Cler. Not ſo faſt Richard!—When God placed man in Paradiſe, which was a delightful garden, he gave him leave to eat of the

the fruit of all the trees in the garden, except one. That one he was commanded not to touch under the pain of death.

Par. Please your Reverence, do you call that the tree of liberty?

Cler. You shall hear.—While man believed what God said, that the fruit of that tree was destructive, he took care not to eat of it.——But in a short time he was told quite another story. The old serpent, the devil, with whom Adam and his wife had no acquaintance, and therefore were not on their guard against his lies, said to Eve, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? and the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*——Now you see there was a very plain law laid down to Adam and his wife, which they were to keep. They could not misunderstand it, if they only attended to it; and the keeping of it was plainly for their interest, because death was to be the consequence of their transgression. It surely had been better for them to have remained ignorant of the knowledge of good and evil which their deceiver boasted of, than to have learned it at the expence of their happiness!

Par. I confess that is very true; and I have often wondered how Adam and his wife could be such fools!

Cler. My friend, we who know and feel the miseries which Adam brought on himself and his race, are apt to wonder at his folly; but we can have little doubt that any other man would just have done as he did.—He knew no evil.—He had never experienced any other state than that of innocence and happiness, and therefore was not aware of the deceit the devil was putting upon him.—It was a very artful one, and what the devil has often repeated under various forms, and what he is now trying again under the cloak of *Liberty and Equality*.—In order to make Eve and her husband break the law, he spoke evil of the lawgiver.—He misrepresented their king to them, the king of heaven, whom he painted as a tyrant who had a design to enslave them, by keeping the forbidden fruit from them, not because it was hurtful, but because it would make them in love with liberty, and put them on an equal footing with himself.—*For God doth know*, said the devil, *that ye shall not die*, as he pretends to you, but that if ye eat of this fruit, ye shall be like himself, *ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.*—The temptation was very powerful.—It flattered them

them with independence, filled their hearts with pride, made them ſhake off their allegiance to God, eat of the fruit that was forbidden, or, in other words, taſte of a liberty that God had denied them, and ſo they became miſerable themſelves, and the parents of a miſerable race.——For inſtead of being *free* by tranſgreſſing the divine law, they became ſlaves to the devil who had ſeduced them, and to violent paſſions and groſs affections, which are the cauſe of all the miſchiefs that happen in the world.

Par. I ſtill wonder, Sir, how the devil could ſuppoſe that Adam and Eve would be perſuaded to do any thing to make them forfeit the perfect happineſs they enjoyed, or how they could be tempted to ſeek a change in their condition!

Cler. You need not wonder at that at all.—The devil had played at that game before, though he had made nothing by it.—— He once had been happy in heaven, as Adam was in Paradiſe, but pride took poſſeſſion of him, and in ſeeking a higher ſtation than God had aſſigned him, and perhaps refuſing to obey the authority which the Almighty had given to ſome higher angels over him, he loſt the place he had obtained, and fell into perdition. St. Jude ſays, *The angels which kept not their* FIRST *eſtate, but left their own habitation*, or the rank God had allotted them, *he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the judgment of the great day*.—Hence as pride was the deſtruction of mighty angels, whoſe nature was more excellent than that of man, the devil naturally ſuppoſed that the inferior nature could not withſtand the engine which had corrupted and deſtroyed what was ſuperior, therefore it was as eaſy for man to be miſled as it had been for the angels.—— Adam certainly did not know the extent of the threatened puniſhment till it overtook him; ſo that not being acquainted with the nature of miſery, he was leſs guarded againſt it than he ought to have been.—His folly however was in not believing God who told him of his danger, and as great folly is every man guilty of who will not be warned either by his own experience, or the experience and admonitions of others when they caution him againſt ſtaking his happineſs upon raſh experiments; but it is the general folly and weakneſs of our nature not to take advice, nor to reflect on the conſequence of plauſible ſchemes, till they end in diſappointment, ſhame, and miſery, and people come to eat the bitter fruits of repentance.

Par. All this, Sir, I can eaſily underſtand, and I feel the force of what you ſay; for indeed it is but too true.—God is certainly the Sovereign of both angels and men, becauſe he made them.— He therefore had a juſt and incontrovertible right to make what laws he choſe for their government, and to puniſh them for their diſobedience.

diſobedience. Never indeed could there be *equality* between the Creator and the creature, and therefore all the world muſt agree in condemning the pride and madneſs of the angels, and of the firſt man, who aſpired at a higher rank than it had pleaſed God to allot them.—But is not this matter foreign to the Liberty and Equality we were formerly ſpeaking of?—What connection is there between the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the Tree of Liberty?

Cler. A great connection; and all that I have been ſaying is to point it out.—*Both Trees are Trees of knowledge of good and evil.*—Adam knew good, but he was ignorant of evil till he eat of the fruit of that accurſed tree. The French, in one ſenſe, may be ſaid to have known good, but they never experienced the miſeries they now ſuffer—till they planted the *Tree of Liberty*.—We ourſelves experience a good, or a happineſs, unknown in the ſame degree to any other nation in the world; but ſhould we plant the Tree of Liberty, that happineſs would be deſtroyed, and we ſhould experience evil, ſuch evil as no other cauſe could produce.

Par. Sir, this is wonderful! This ſhews me how the ſin of our firſt parents ſtands as a beacon to all ages, to warn them againſt pride and rebellion!

Cler. Undoubtedly.—For it will be evident to any man, that will conſider the reaſon which induced Adam to eat of the fruit of the *tree of knowledge*, and the reaſon why you or any perſon are for planting the *tree of Liberty*, that they are preciſely the ſame.—Let him alſo conſider the conſequences of both, and he will perceive them to be alike.—Adam eat of the *forbidden fruit*, that he might become a *god*. You are for planting the *Tree of Liberty*, that you may become a *king*, or a *god*; for kings are often called gods in ſcripture.——Adam could not eat of the one tree without renouncing his allegiance to his king, or to God, who was the only king at that time over man; and you cannot plant the other, without throwing off your allegiance to *your* king; becauſe every action, which calls his authority in queſtion, is treaſon againſt his majeſty, and is rebellion againſt God from whom the king has received authority to govern you.—Adam, by eating the forbidden fruit, brought miſery not only on himſelf, but the whole world; and you, by planting the tree of Liberty, or rather the ſtandard of rebellion, would involve yourſelf and your family in ruin, and do all in your power to turn your country into a field of blood, and to bring it to deſtruction.——The means too by which Adam was perſuaded to tranſgreſs his duty, was deceit, a falſe though plauſible pretence, the promiſe or aſſurance of ſomething

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which, while it held forth a tempting object, was fraught with miſchief and ruin. And it is by the ſame deceitful means that people are now cheated by needy or ambitious men, who having deſigns to execute which require the aſſiſtance of the people, endeavour to blind them with a dazzling picture of liberty, which they do not need, and of equality which they never can arrive at, becauſe God hath otherwiſe ordained.

Par. I can have no difficulty in granting that men ought to ſubmit to lawful authority, and ought not to reſiſt that authority, whatever temptation may be held out to them, becauſe nothing can excuſe a breach of duty.—But then the queſtion is, Where is this authority lodged? I am therefore to take the liberty to aſk your reverence a queſtion or two, which I would wiſh to have clearly anſwered.

Cler. Aſk what queſtions you pleaſe, and I will anſwer them as far as I am able.

Par. Well then, as all men are ſaid to be born equal, how comes it that kings or other perſons take upon them to govern the people, unleſs the people chuſe to have it ſo, and call them to rule over them? And is not the conſent of the people the real origin of all government, and may they not alter the government as they think fit?

Cler. Your queſtions are very proper, and though they ſeem to contain a great deal of matter, and to be involved in much difficulty, may be anſwered in few words; becauſe the buſineſs is clearly handled in the word of God, which you have very properly declared to be your guide.—Were it true that all men were born equal, and that their conſent was really the origin of government, there could be no doubt but they would have a right to give ſuch form as they pleaſed to the government they had created.—But even though the government of any nation ſhould be formed by the people, and be conferred on any perſon for the general good, they could have no right, once ſuch authority had been given to govern them, to take it again into their own hands, unleſs the conditions had been broken on which it had been granted.—And even in that caſe, perhaps it would be more prudent to ſubmit to ſome errors or abuſes on the part of the Ruler, than to engage in a civil war, which would hazard every thing that ought to be dear to a nation.—This however has nothing to do with the point in hand.—You ſpeak of all men being born equal.—In order to make this equality, it would be neceſſary that all men ſhould come into exiſtence at the ſame moment, that they ſhould be arrived at maturity, and not ſtanding in need of each others help.—But the ſtate of mankind is quite the reverſe of this. Man

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is born helpleſs and dependent.—Without the foſtering care of others he would immediately periſh. And though he ſhould be fed in order to preſerve his life, yet unleſs he were alſo trained up under ſtrict diſcipline for many years, he would, when arrived at maturity, be worſe than a wild beaſt to other men.—Whence then comes the authority by which that diſcipline is exerciſed? Not from the child ſurely! yet if it be exerciſed without a right, which no man can claim by nature over another, you will ſay, it muſt be conſidered as a tyranny and uſurpation, even though evidently for the advantage of the perſon governed, becauſe it is without his conſent.——Here you ſee is a difficulty, which all the philoſophers or republicans in the world will never be able to get over, or reconcile to their doctrine of equality.—— A creature is born in ſuch a ſtate as to require to be governed; but if he cannot lawfully be governed without authority to be given to ſome perſon over him, either he ought not to be governed at all till he is come of age to be able to give his conſent, which would naturally ſoon deſtroy ſociety, or the authority to govern him muſt come from another.

Par. Why to be ſure this is rather puzzling.—For if I am not to govern my children, or the king his ſubjects, till they come of age to give their conſent, we ſhould make a fine kettle of fiſh on't.—Odds my life! I would rather have no children at all!—The people would ſoon become like baboons in a wood with long tails! We ſhould have nothing but perpetual grinning, and tearing one another in pieces.——I don't know what to think of this buſineſs, not I.—Government muſt ſurely have begun in ſome other way.

Cler. Yes, my friend, in a very different way indeed; and in order to underſtand on what foundation it is built, we muſt go back to the fountain head. We muſt trace man to his origin, and there we ſhall find of what his dignity conſiſts, and what are thoſe "Rights of man," which ſeem at preſent to be the great object of the world's idolatry, as well as the authority under which the kings of the various nations exerciſe dominion over their ſubjects.

Par. Now this is beginning at the right end of the buſineſs.—If you can ſhew me all that from ſcripture, then I ſhall ſtand upon ſure ground, and be no longer puzzled, or be going ſee-ſaw from one opinion to another, for God does not contrive things by halves.

Cler. If it be aſked, What is Man? which muſt be enquired into before we know his dignity or his power, we ſhall be anſwered by Paine, (that *will o' th' wiſp*, which has led ſo many people

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into a quagmire) Man is Man; which is juſt as much information as an aſtronomer ſhould convey to his pupils by telling them the Moon is the Moon.——Paine, and the other advocates for equality and the ſovereignty of the people, could not have hit on an argument more unlikely to perſuade the ſober part of mankind to ſubmit to popular government, than telling them that *Man* is *Man*.—Man, merely as man, is more dangerous to his fellows than a wild beaſt. Man is a depraved creature, and he never acts entirely from the impulſe of his own nature, but he acts wrong. What is a tyrant? Is he not a man driven on furiouſly by violent and cruel paſſions, or ſordid affections?—Will it be ſaid that this wild beaſt is to be found in no other den than a palace?——The antient Republics of Sparta and Athens branded the kings of Perſia with the name of tyrants, for making war upon them. What were thoſe republics when in their turn, they lorded it over the other ſtates of Greece, beſieged and deſtroyed their towns, and either ſlaughtered their inhabitants, or conſigned them to perpetual ſlavery?——The Spartans and Athenians, from their great love of liberty, or rather from their deſire to act as ſo many petty kings, watched over each other with jealouſy and hatred, and conſidered every one who was nobly deſcended, had a great fortune, or had acquired great fame for his abilities, as a tyrant, or ready to become one to his country. What were thoſe republicans, when, after ſuch a citizen had ſpent his life in fighting their battles, managing their revenues, watching over the public intereſt, and giving perpetual proofs of love for his country; what were thoſe republicans, I ſay, when, from mere envy, they baniſhed ſuch a man from his country, or put him to death; or either confiſcated his whole property, or fined him in a ſum almoſt equal to his fortune? Will it be ſaid that thoſe Spartans and Athenians, the boaſted patterns of our philoſophers and liberty men, were not the greateſt tyrants in the world?——The difference indeed between the real great men of Greece, who were treated as the ſervants of the people, and the people themſelves who claimed the ſovereignty, cannot be more finely painted than in the words of the noble Athenian when he was dying. His friends were recounting his heroic actions, but he told them they had forgotten the moſt glorious circumſtance of his life; *I never cauſed a ſingle citizen to put on mourning;* a ſpeech which could not come from my lords the people, for they had made their neighbours often mourn in multitudes without the leaſt provocation.——We need not however go back to antiquity, to find out that *Man* is *Man*.—He ſhews himſelf in his true colours in all ages.——Louis the late king of France has been branded by the Convention as a tyrant,

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becauſe a number of the people were killed in attempting to break into the palace to murder him.——Self defence is the great law of nature; but it has clearly been proved that the king had no hand in that buſineſs. But what character did this ſame Convention act, when they murdered Louis and his unfortunate queen on a ſcaffold, without convicting them of any crime?—Were they tyrants or not, when, a little before, they cauſed multitudes in the different priſons of Paris to be maſſacred without even the *Form* of a trial? And what part is the Convention playing at preſent, in again filling the priſons for a freſh maſſacre, beheading its own members, and the generals who have done it moſt ſervice, by twenty at a time, without allowing them to make any defence, and in ſending the *guillotine* through the kingdom under the *eſcorte* of an armed mob, to lop off the head of every man who pretends to ſay that his life or his property is his own!—Yet theſe are the perſons who exclaim againſt tyrants. Theſe are the boaſted lights and reformers of the world, who profeſs to enlighten and humanize mankind, and make them kind, gentle, juſt, generous, and purely virtuous!

Par. Well, it is ſome comfort that the devil will get them all at laſt!—However is it not a pity that we ſhould be plagued and bamboozled about the "Rights of Man," and the ſovereignty of the people, and the light of nature, and all that, when they are only ſo many ſtumbling-blocks to break people's ſhins?

Cler. When people ſee, they know how to avoid what will hurt them; but when they walk in the dark, every thing proves a ſtumbling-block.—If man has no better guide than the light of nature, or of his own reaſon, he can chuſe no otherwiſe than his nature prompts him. Hence his paſſions become his pilot, and he runs upon every rock or quickſand.——Pride firſt miſled human nature, and it continues to keep man ignorant of himſelf; and therefore when man claims what he calls native dignity, when he ſets himſelf up as a king, or when nations call themſelves ſovereigns over their princes, (for it ſignifies nothing whether the claim be ſet up by one of the people or by the whole) they are only playing the ſame game that Adam did when he wanted to be a god.——The antient Philoſophers, as they were heathens, acted chiefly by the light of nature or reaſon, aſſiſted by the faint glimmerings of the firſt revelation, which had almoſt been extinguiſhed, or by the information they picked up by their caſual intercourſe with the more enlightened nations, and therefore it was no wonder that their ſyſtems of government and religion were equally contrary to the will of heaven.——The leading people in France, though in poſſeſſion of the divine revelation,

were

were little diſpoſed to ſubmit to its diſcipline.—Pride flattered them with a liberty which the will of God had denied them, and the philoſophers of Greece and Rome became more powerful orators, more brilliant patterns, than the apoſtles of Chriſt.—The French therefore commenced philoſophers, and acting, as the old philoſophers had done, by the light of nature, are become heathens in their turn; for they are now as far from God as if they had been educated in Japan.——When we are to contemplate man then, we are not to be guided by the madneſs of the French, the fooliſh dreams of *Paine*, or the light of nature, but by the divine Revelation, which diſcovers his origin, the end of his creation, and the extent of his privileges.

Par. This is what I have been looking for, an't pleaſe your Reverence!

Cler. We are not to view man altogether as he came firſt from the hand of God, for he was perfect and innocent; nor as he ſhall be hereafter, for his nature will be changed.—In the firſt ſtate he had not, and in his laſt eſtate he will not have, the nature under which he now ſubſiſts and acts.—St. Paul deſcribing man in his preſent ſtate, calls him *The old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts;* and he repreſents him incapable of doing what is good, but as he is directed by a certain influence of the ſpirit of God upon the ſoul, known among Chriſtians by the name of *grace;* which *Paine* and the French philoſophers know nothing of, and therefore treat with contempt, as they do all other divine things.--Both body and ſoul are clogged with many infirmities, and man is moved by paſſions which, though originally good, are totally perverted, and made, by the force of ſin, to counteract the deſign for which the hand of the Creator planted them in the human nature.——Even in his beſt eſtate, far leſs in his preſent condition, man could not boaſt of the origin of his body.——He is but a lump of clay; and therefore Adam, the moſt perfect man that ever exiſted, was neither better nor worſe than an earthen veſſel in the hands of a potter.—Hence he could have no rights by nature, and from nature his poſterity can claim none.—His ſoul, though of divine origin, becauſe it comes immediately from God, being now depraved by ſin, is ſubjected by its maker to a courſe of diſcipline calculated for ſubduing its pride, reſtraining its paſſions, purifying its affections, and bringing it gradually to a capacity for an eternal and ſpiritual exiſtence. A ſtate of probation like this does not imply much native dignity, and as little claim can man found upon the nature of his ſoul, for what are fooliſhly called "Natural Rights."

Par. This, to be ſure, cannot be denied, becauſe it agrees exactly

actly with the word of God.—But though man had no rights by nature, God could, and certainly did, give him rights.

Cler. Yes; God gave man rights or privileges; but they were given with a certain view, and to an extent which was limited.—Man is God's ſervant becauſe he is his creature, therefore man muſt obey, or ſubmit to whatever limitations God has been pleaſed to preſcribe to the human will.——Man is made for another world, and not for this; hence his actions muſt have reſpect to that. Should he act as if this ſtate was to be eternal to him, or as if death reduced man to the level of the beaſts that periſh, he would counteract the deſign of his creation.—He does the ſame in a greater or leſs degree when he oppoſes, through pride or obſtinacy, any of the limitations or reſtrictions by which his conduct here is reſtrained.—So that when man talks of privileges God hath not given him, or endeavours to extend thoſe he has received, beyond the bounds the Almighty hath ſet to them, he abuſes the divine indulgence, and rebels againſt God.—In a word, if man is ſubjected by God to the dominion of man, he is as much bound by the law of God, and by the nature of his exiſtence, to ſubmit to that dominion, as if God himſelf did govern him viſibly.

Par. No perſon will deny that but an Atheiſt. Has man then authority from God to govern other men? If you can ſhew me that, it will knock equality on the head at once.

Clor. When we look back to the charter which God gave to man when he had made him, we find that Adam got dominion over not only the inferior creatures, but his own kind.

Par. Sir, how could that be, when there were no men in the world to govern?

Cler. If there were no men in the world at firſt but Adam, it is plain there was no equality at firſt.—Adam had no equal.—Even his wife was his inferior, and his ſubject, whom he had a right to govern; for God ſaid to Eve, *Thy deſire ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall* RULE *over thee.*—On this firſt law in regard to the authority of the huſband over the wife, St. Paul builds the univerſal dominion of all huſbands, and commands all wives to ſubmit to it. *Let women keep ſilence in the churches*, ſaith he; *for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as alſo ſaith the law.*—And elſewhere the ſame apoſtle ſays, *But I ſuffer not a woman to teach, nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence. For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve* The apoſtle, ſpeaking of the law which enjoins the ſubmiſſion of the woman, refers to the authority given to Adam over Eve, as I have mentioned; and he alſo argues an inferiority in woman to man, from her being made after him, and no doubt from her being borrowed from him; ſo here we ſee the firſt man

had

had a natural property in the first woman, because she was made of part of himself.——By the divine institution of marriage, the like property and dominion are conveyed to every husband over his wife; for our Saviour calls them *one flesh*, implying that as Adam had a right or property in that part of him naturally which formed the body of Eve, so God, by calling husbands and wives one flesh, has given the same right to every husband, as if his wife had been formed from him, as Eve was from Adam.—The same doctrine is laid down in positive terms by St. Peter—*Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands*, which is a command evidently founded on a superiority given to man over the woman; and it is no doubt given for this purpose, that in a family, which is a little kingdom, there should not be two rulers with equal power, for that would breed contention, confusion, and ruin. The husband therefore is made head or king over his own house.—Hence we see there was not equality between Adam and Eve, for he was king or ruler, and she was his subject, whom God gave him authority to govern.

Par. This is a point that cannot be disputed, unless when any of our good women, for they are all *sans culottes*, are disposed to take the power into their own hands.—But how can this be an argument for sovereign power?

Cler. This is so far an argument for it, that if Adam had a right to govern the only person who might have pretended to be his equal, he had an equal right at least to govern those that descended from him, as every man did. Hence when he came to have sons and daughters, he was king, and they were his subjects. There was as little, and could be as little, equality therefore in this case as there was before.——Cain, and his brother and sisters, could no more be equal to their father, than Eve was to her husband.

Par. This is perfectly convincing.—Every person will admit it to be true.—But though Adam was king or sovereign while he lived, (because nature, which must be acknowledged a divine right of itself, had subjected all men to his authority) yet surely the rest of mankind must have been equal! one brother could not pretend to govern another!

Cler. You are quite mistaken.—Every man, by becoming a husband and a father, became also a sovereign over his own family and descendants, while they lived within the reach of his authority; but still the supreme power over the whole belonged to the eldest son; that is to say, Cain, by being Adam's eldest son, would have succeeded his father in the sovereignty, had he not forfeited his right. This we are expressly told in scripture.—When Cain murmured, and devised mischief against his brother Abel,

because

becauſe God had accepted Abel's ſacrifice and rejected his, the Almighty expoſtulated with him thus. *Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door. And unto thee ſhall be his* (Abel's) *deſire, and thou ſhalt* RULE *over him:*—Or, as it is expreſſed in the margin of the bible, *Thou ſhalt have the* EXCELLENCY, *and he ſhall be* SUBJECT *unto thee.* Thus the ſame Charter, which had been given to Adam, was renewed to Cain; and he would have enjoyed the dominion over Abel, and the reſt of his Father's family, had he not loſt his right; but God baniſhed him for the murder of his brother. The ſovereignty was on that account transferred to Seth, who was afterwards born in place of Abel.

Par. Was not this royal authority given only for a time? Did it not ceaſe afterwards, and *Equality* come in among mankind?

Cler. How could that be?—If God gave royal authority as the neceſſary means of reſtraining and making mankind happy, the means could never be unneceſſary while the end was to be attained; and that was while man remained in the world. For the more numerous mankind became, the reaſons for *inequality* and *ſubordination* became more and more urgent.—Even the Flood, which reduced mankind again to a few perſons, did not open a door to equality.—Noah was lord and king over his ſons and their families, as Adam had been over his; and the right of ſucceſſion was handed down from the father to the eldeſt ſon in the new world, as it had been in the old.

Par. When God confounded the language of mankind, by dividing it into a number of new tongues, as we read was done at the building of Babel, did this make no alteration in the government of the world?

Cler. It made this alteration, that inſtead of *one* nation, as all the world might have been called till then, it made no fewer than *ſeventy;* and inſtead of one ſovereign, it made as many as there were nations. This is a fact poſitively eſtabliſhed in ſcripture. For while it relates to us the diviſion of mankind into nations, it gives us the names of their reſpective ſovereigns, after whom the different countries were named in which they ſettled with their people. So that at the formation of the different nations, a new charter was given by God to one man to govern a multitude, as was done at the creation, and which ſuch individual had certainly no right to do without ſuch authority.—This was the general ſtate of mankind as it was eſtabliſhed by God, and which, as there is no appearance in ſcripture of his having altered it, muſt be ſuppoſed intended for perpetual duration. Indeed the right of ſucceſſion

from the father to the eldeſt ſon, is mentioned in ſcripture long after the flood.—Abraham was choſen by God to be the head of a new nation, and was inveſted with all the powers and dignity of a king. After his death he was ſucceeded by Iſaac, who would have been ſucceeded by Eſau his eldeſt ſon, had not God ſo ordered it that Jacob obtained the rights of the firſt-born. When Jacob was bleſſed by Iſaac, which he did prophetically, it was in theſe remarkable words, *Be* LORD *over thy brethren, and let thy mother's ſons bow down to thee.* This was giving him the dominion that Eſau, as *firſt-born*, ought to have had; and accordingly Eſau complained and vowed revenge againſt Jacob for robbing him of it. Jacob however, although it was obtained by fraud on his part, had certainly a divine right for exerciſing the dominion which his father, as a prophet, had conferred on him.

Par. I have heard, Sir, that when God brought the children of Iſrael out of Egypt, he gave them a republican form of government; and if that was the caſe, muſt it not be conſidered as ſetting aſide monarchy, or at leaſt a proof that it was not agreeable to him?

Cler. I have already ſhewn you from ſcripture, that God did expreſsly authoriſe ſingle perſons, or kings, to govern nations; and therefore that which the Almighty inſtituted muſt in all reſpects have been right, for God cannot do wrong, or commit miſtakes which he afterwards finds it neceſſary to rectify.—With reſpect to the children of Iſrael, nothing can be plainer than that God did not give them a republican government. For while he gave to other nations human kings, or men like themſelves, to govern them; he reſerved the people of Iſrael, or his church, to be his own kingdom.—And accordingly, while other nations received their municipal laws, as they are called, or the rules for their internal government, from their human kings, the Iſraelites, or people of God, received their laws from God himſelf.—As there are in every kingdom miniſters under the king for managing the public buſineſs, ſo God had alſo his miniſters over the Iſraelites, to whom he gave his orders from time to time immediately from heaven, and who were appointed to ſee his laws obeyed.—A king's chief miniſters, as they are always about his perſon, and admitted to an intimacy with him, are diſtinguiſhed by titles of honour ſuited to the importance of their office, and to the dignity of their maſter.——Hence Moſes and Aaron, who were God's chief miniſters over the Iſraelites, were diſtinguiſhed by very peculiar manifeſtations of God's favour, and exalted to a dignity which no other perſons in the nation enjoyed, or dared to aſpire at without being guilty of a great crime. Moſes is called no leſs than a *king;*

and

and Aaron was appointed, as high prieſt, to act as the proxy of the great *Jehovah*, who was afterwards to atone for the ſin of the world; and accordingly did ſeveral times act as a mediator, and particularly ſtood between the dead and the living in the time of a plague, that his typical power might ſtop the divine vengeance.—The love of equality, ſo far as it tends to level thoſe that are above us, is the inveterate leproſy which pride hath implanted in our nature, and from which the choſen people of God were not exempted in the wilderneſs.—A few factious men, who could not behold the power and dignity conferred on Moſes and Aaron without envy, endeavoured to raiſe a mutiny in the camp of Iſrael, under the pretence that the people's liberties were in danger from the exceſſive power which Moſes and Aaron had uſurped.—*Ye take too much upon you*, ſaid thoſe "*Friends of the People*" to Moſes and Aaron, *ſeeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up yourſelves above the congregation of the Lord?* Moſes told them that their rebellion was not againſt him and Aaron, but againſt God, whoſe miniſters they were, and under whoſe authority they were exerciſing their power.——This was ſoon verified in the moſt awful manner; for God puniſhed the ringleaders of the rebellion, by cauſing the earth to open and ſwallow them alive; and though the people had not the ſenſe to ſee at firſt the deſign of this judgment, and the hand that inflicted it, (ſo much had their levelling principles blinded them to the truth) but murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron as if they had done it, they were ſoon made ſenſible of their miſtake by a plague inflicted upon themſelves, which deſtroyed near fifteen thouſand of them.

Par. An't pleaſe your reverence, if it did not give you offence, and that you would think me hard to convince, I would propoſe a doubt.

Cler. My friend, you cannot give me greater pleaſure than to open your mind freely. What is your doubt?

Par. Why, Sir, one thing perplexes me, and makes me doubt whether the government of the Iſraelites at that time can be brought as an argument for kingly government; and it is this; a conſiderable time afterwards, the people deſired to have a king like the reſt of the nations. Does not this look as if they had never been under a king before?

Cler. From the day that God formed the children of Iſrael into a diſtinct nation, and choſe them to be his church or peculiar people, to the beginning of the reign of Saul who was their firſt earthly king, God was himſelf king of his people; and all the Judges who ſucceeded Moſes, were only ſo many prime miniſters

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as it were under their divine king.—Even thoſe judges were not choſen by the people, which would have been the caſe had their government been republican; but by God, who often, in a miraculous manner, raiſed up men of extraordinary abilities to govern his people under him. All this time their government was divine, and as long as they ſubmitted to it, and obeyed the laws which God had given them, they were the happieſt and moſt proſperous people in the world. But, like ourſelves, they did not know when they were well.—They were always fond of novelties.——Every thing that was in faſhion, or practiſed in neighbouring countries, they wiſhed to imitate.——The cuſtoms of their neighbours had frequently corrupted their religion; and at laſt theſe cuſtoms obtained a ſtrong influence over their political opinions.——They were often led into idolatry and rebellion againſt God and their rulers; and at length they wiſhed to throw off God's government altogether, and to have a man for their king.——At the time they took this in their head, Samuel was prophet among them; and to him they applied for a king. Now had it been right in itſelf, or had it been the practice in any nation, for the people to chuſe their own king or ruler, the Iſraelites would have choſen ſome perſon themſelves, and given him authority to govern them; but inſtead of that, they deſired a king of Samuel.—Yet even the prophet did not take upon him to appoint a king, but reproved the people, and mourned before the Lord, becauſe they had rejected God from being their king, and deſired another in his room.——For the queſtion was not, Whether their form of government ſhould be a monarchy or republic, but who ſhould be their king?—Whether it ſhould be God or a man? They rejected God, and deſired to have a man like themſelves for their king; and accordingly God ordered Samuel to let them have their will.—And how was it? Did the people appoint their king?—Did Samuel appoint their king?—No—It was God himſelf that choſe their king, and gave him a divine right to govern them, for he commanded Samuel to anoint for king the perſon he ſhould point out to him;—and hence Saul was called *the Lord's anointed.* So ſacred too is the perſon of a king, that when Saul was defeated and wounded, and was at his own deſire killed by one of his ſoldiers, that he might not be taken priſoner by the enemy, the man was afterwards put to death by David, Saul's ſucceſſor, who ſaid to him, *How waſt thou not afraid to put forth thine hand, to deſtroy the Lord's anointed?*

Par. Though the kings who were choſen by God were very properly indeed called His *anointed*, and ſo were ſacred in their perſons, can that be the caſe with kings now?

Cler.

Cler. Yes ſurely.—The kings who reigned in ancient times over the heathen nations, were as much God's anointed as Saul was, becauſe they held their crowns under his authority, and ſeveral of them are in ſcripture expreſsly called his ſervants by God himſelf.——*Thus ſaith the Lord God of hoſts the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will ſend and take* NEBUCHADNEZZAR *the king of Babylon* MY SERVANT, *and will ſet his throne upon theſe ſtones that I have hid, and he ſhall ſpread his royal pavillion over them.*——*Thus ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer, that ſaith of* CYRUS, *he is my* SHEPHERD, *and ſhall perform all my pleaſure.* Who can doubt that theſe princes held their crowns by a divine right? Yet they were not choſen or called in the ſame manner as Saul was, by the immediate command of God. They are called his *ſervants*, not becauſe they ſerved him in acts of *piety*, for they were heathens; but becauſe they acted under his authority, and were his inſtruments in carrying forward (though unknown both to themſelves and to the reſt of the world at that time) the deſigns of his providence.——All other kings in thoſe ages were equally his ſervants with Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar; and ſo has every king been in every age ſince who came lawfully by his crown.——On this point St. Paul ſpeaks deciſively, *Let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are* ORDAINED *of* GOD. *Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the* ORDINANCE *of* GOD; *and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Now it is evident that if St. Paul's precept is not to be applied to kings in general, it will apply to no king at all.—It will only be ſo many words put together without any meaning, which it would be blaſphemy to ſuppoſe. At the time St. Paul gave that command, there was not a ſingle king in the world, nor has been ſince, whom God viſibly choſe and cauſed to be anointed. Nor are we to ſuppoſe that the apoſtle meant his precept ſhould apply only to *good* kings, for it was directed to the Romans, who were then governed by the Emperor Nero, one of the greateſt monſters that at any time appeared in human ſhape; and to whoſe cruelty the apoſtle himſelf afterwards fell a victim.

Therefore if kings in ancient times, who were heathens and the moſt cruel tyrants, and conſequently were enemies to God and man, were reckoned God's ſervants, and held their crowns by a divine right as well as Saul or David; ſurely kings in modern times, whatever may be their religion or morals, may as juſtly be called the *miniſters of God*, as Nero, or any other of the Roman emperors under whom the meek and ſubmiſſive Chriſtians ſuffered the moſt cruel torments.—Indeed kings may now as fitly be denominated God's *anointed*, as mankind may be called his *creatures*.——It is no

proof

proof that men are not God's creatures, becauſe they do not come into exiſtence in the manner that Adam did; nor is it any proof that kings are not now his anointed, becauſe they are not viſibly choſen by him as Saul and David were——The former derive their exiſtence, and the latter their authority, by laws which the divine providence hath thought fit to eſtabliſh, and ſince the ordinance of God relative to the authority of kings is made known to us in his holy word, that *ſure word of prophecy*, which is given by the ſpirit of God to be *a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*, we have no more right to break that ordinance by murdering or depoſing thoſe kings, than we have to break the laws which guard our own exiſtence by being guilty of ſuicide.——It is ſo evident therefore that the power of kings is founded on divine right, that I need not ſay more upon that head.—To examine how far the claim of divine right belongs to the kings who rule the world at preſent, is not my buſineſs, nor is it neceſſary to the argument.—It is ſufficient however to ſatisfy us of their title, that no perſon in any kingdom can ſhew a better, and therefore their right is of courſe eſtabliſhed.——It was my deſign to prove the general propoſition, that the regal power came firſt from God; and as I have ſhewn that monarchy was the firſt form of government, and has obtained in all ages and nations, except when ſet aſide by the rebellion of the people againſt their ſovereigns, it muſt therefore be conſidered as a divine inſtitution, which can never be lawfully aboliſhed till God himſelf do it. And as that has not yet been done, although the world may be ſaid to have almoſt run its courſe, we may conclude that God intends it ſhould expire only with the world itſelf; from which we may infer that monarchy, being the contrivance of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, is the form of government moſt conducive to the general peace of the world, and to the internal happineſs and proſperity of any nation.

Par. I have only one queſtion more to aſk you, Sir, on the ſubject of government, which I beg you will anſwer, though I own I have now received ſufficient information to ſatisfy me about its origin; it is this, How come people to talk ſo much about an original compact between the king and his ſubjects? and does not a compact, which is only another name for a bargain, imply that both are bound by certain conditions, which can only bind one party ſo long as they are obſerved by the other? ſo that ſhould any king infringe his part of the compact, the people may ſet him aſide, and chuſe another in his ſtead?

Cler. You ſay people talk about an original compact; and ſo they do: but they alſo talk about the philoſophers ſtone, and are as likely to find the one as the other.——There never was an original

ginal compact as the foundation of government in any nation, and the notion of such a compact is but a late contrivance, invented to amuse and mislead the people, and to be a kind of excuse for the violent alterations which have in former times been made in our own constitution.—An original compact, taking it as the first cause of society, or of kingly government, you are already convinced from scripture never existed; for God made the first society by tying men together by natural affection; and he instituted the first monarchy by giving one man authority to govern others. But tho' the scripture had not decided this point in the clear and positive manner it has done, the idea of an original compact could not be admitted by any considerate person without proof, without ONE example at least of the thing so roundly asserted; but no such proof can possibly be adduced, for an original compact was impracticable; and it would also have been unlawful. I say it was impracticable because mankind never were in that state which could give rise to such a compact.—A compact is supposed to be a contrivance among a multitude of savage men, for the establishment of government among them, as the necessary means of their common happiness. Now mankind never were without government; and at any rate savage men would have been incapable of entering into such reasoning on the disadvantages of their brutal state, as to lead them to conclude that, in order to be happy, they should no longer continue savage, but become civilized.—Savage men could never thus argue.—And savage men, as such, never would agree to controul their appetites, the gratification of which constitutes the sole pleasure and happiness of a savage.——Civilization is always introduced by an external cause. Men were more civilized in the first age after the creation or the flood, than at any other period, because they had God for their teacher; and as there was always some part of mankind in a civilized state, it was by means of the civilized that the savage part of mankind were improved. The truth is, instead of being first savage and then becoming civilized, savage nations fell into that condition from a state of civilization, which was owing to their becoming idolaters, and sensual, and gradually brutal, in their manners.—This is evident from the history of all nations.——An original compact therefore implies that those who form it should be so civilized in their manners, as to understand all the advantages it can yield, and be disposed to submit to the restraints it would necessarily impose.—But as no savage nation could have that sagacity, or possess the self-denial necessary to the curbing of their passions, without which government cannot subsist, therefore government could never take its rise from such a cause.—So that they who admit that mankind were

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at firſt in a ſavage ſtate, do thereby deſtroy their favourite ſyſtem of government founded on an original compact, for ſavages neither could contrive, nor would they ſubmit to government; therefore it muſt have been inſtituted by ſome other authority, which could be no other than that of God, and this leads us to, and confirms, the doctrine of the divine origin of government, which ſuch political writers do all they can to overturn.——As government did not take its riſe from an original compact or agreement made among men in a ſavage or uncivilized ſtate, becauſe mankind were not placed in ſuch a ſtate by their maker; and though they had, would not have been diſpoſed to make the conceſſions to one another which the reſtraints ariſing from government would have required, neither would it have been *lawful* for them to have inveſted any man, or any number of men, with that abſolute power which every ſupreme authority in all nations enjoys, and without which the end of government cannot be promoted.—When I ſay that mankind could not lawfully have created an abſolute power among themſelves, I mean that it would have been an encroachment on the prerogative of God; becauſe abſolute power muſt do ſome things which in their own nature are ſinful, unleſs they are done under the ſanction of the divine authority. Man we know has no power over his own life.—He may neither take it away with his own hand, nor authorize another to do it. But power over the life of the governed is eſſential to every ſupreme governor in certain caſes, otherwiſe wicked men could not be controlled.——Therefore as no man could lawfully inveſt another with power over his life; and as ſuch power is neceſſary to government, ſo authority to govern could alone come from him who could give a right to take away the life of man, and that muſt have been God his maker.—There is another thing eſſential to a compact, and it is, that every perſon to be bound by it be of age to underſtand, and give his aſſent to it. This would require that all men connected with ſuch compact ſhould exiſt, and be of full age, at the ſame period of time; for if there be no natural ſuperiority in the foregoing generation over the ſucceeding one, ſurely the act of the parents can never bind the children, and therefore no compact could poſſibly be made, becauſe every hour a new generation is ſpringing up.

Par. Now, Sir, all my ſcruples are removed; and I underſtand the nature of *equality*, and the origin of government ſo well, that I ſhall never again be miſled by the pretended power of the people, or original compacts. I am now convinced there *never was, nor could be equality* among mankind; and therefore to attempt to introduce that which is in direct oppoſition to God's government

vernment of the world, is downright atheiſm.—For to ſay that every man ought to be equal, and none higher or more powerful than another, is the ſame thing as to ſay there is no God, for a difference in rank and in power is abſolutely neceſſary to the peace and happineſs of the world.——Nothing indeed can be more evident, either from the ſcriptures, or the practice of mankind, than that inequality hath ſubſiſted from the creation of man.——It ariſes out of our natural connection with each other; for God hath ſo ordered the ſtate of our exiſtence, that we come into the world branching out from a root like the boughs of a tree: it is from the root that the branches gather nouriſhment and ſtrength.—It is by the nurture of the parent that the children are reared, protected, and eſtabliſhed in the world; and it is by the foſtering care and protecting power of the ſupreme authority in a kingdom, that the members of it are kept in order, and defended in their ſeveral rights.—And I ſee plainly that as it would be againſt nature for the children to call themſelves equal to their father, to controul him within his houſe, or to turn him out of doors, and diſpoſe of his property at pleaſure; ſo it would be equally againſt nature, or the laws eſtabliſhed by God, which are all that we mean when we ſpeak of nature, as well as contrary to the univerſal practice of all nations, for ſubjects to put themſelves on an equal footing with their prince, whom it is now the practice with the French atheiſts to brand with the moſt odious names of reproach. But this I do not wonder at, ſince they now bid defiance to God himſelf; and laugh at thoſe who ſtill believe that there is ſuch a being.——As I am now ſatisfied that the king's authority comes from God, without whoſe ſanction he could have no right to rule other men; I wiſh next to be informed concerning the rights which the ſubjects are entitled to, and whether the government does not abuſe its power by reſtraining the Liberty of the people.

Cler. The end for which government was inſtituted was *to reſtrain evil doers, and to protect them that do well.* To allow evil doers an unbounded liberty, or to do whatever they pleaſe, would be to defeat the very deſign of government.—It would be to turn liberty, which is given us for our good, into licentiouſneſs, which would be our greateſt misfortune.—Government implies reſtraint, the reſtraint of evil; but it is alſo intended to protect thoſe that do well, in the doing whatever they pleaſe, becauſe he that does well can do nothing ſubverſive of the ends of government.—— As far therefore as the government of any nation reſtrains wicked men, and protects the good, it ſo far approaches to pure liberty. In as far as it reſtrains good men in the exerciſe of what is good,

it is oppreſſion, and the deſtruction of liberty. And as far as to this reſtraint over the good, it adds a licence to wicked men to do what they pleaſe, it is anarchy or confuſion, and the groſſeſt ſubverſion of the greateſt human bleſſing.—True liberty is the medium between anarchy and oppreſſion, or between the unbridled will of the people, and the cruel and capricious will of the ruler or rulers; no matter whether there be one or many, a king or a popular aſſembly; for the latter may be as tyrannical as the former; and in almoſt all caſes is more ſo. Liberty does not reſtrain the good, nor give a looſe rein to the wicked; and wherever the wicked are reſtrained, and the good encouraged and protected, there will we find the liberty which God meant his creatures to enjoy as the ſource of their political happineſs.

Par. Why, Sir, this is ſimple and eaſy to be underſtood. Liberty ſignifies the power of doing good, but not of doing evil. Then every government ought to be regulated by the revealed will of God; becauſe all authority comes from him.

Cler. Yes.—Every thing that has God for its author, is perfect in its kind, and made to be ſubordinate to his will; and we ſhall not find one divine inſtitution altered by the philoſophy, or pretended wiſdom, of man, that has not ſuffered in the operation. Perhaps no divine inſtitution is a more melancholy example of this than government, which was eſtabliſhed by God for man's good, by keeping him obedient to the will of his maker, but which has been perverted in all ages of the world, by being converted into an inſtrument for venting or gratifying cruel and irregular paſſions.——It is indiſputable that man's happineſs is more or leſs perfect, the more or leſs intercourſe he has with his Maker, or as he is obedient or not to his will; and therefore men were never ſo happy as when immediately nurtured and governed by infinite wiſdom.——Next to the being governed by the immediate direction and interpoſition of God ſpeaking audibly, or otherwiſe making his will known, to man, as he did to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the following patriarchs, and frequently afterwards to many of the children of Iſrael, is the being governed by rulers who fear God, and by laws which correſpond with his nature, and with the revelation he hath made of his will. The municipal, or domeſtic, laws of any ſociety can never be formed by ſuch a ſtandard, unleſs its ruler, or rulers, regard the honour of God, and the *future*, as well as the preſent, happineſs of the people, as the great ends for which laws ought to be made; and the favour of God the greateſt reward, and his vengeance the greateſt evil, that a ruler can hope for, or fear.—If we are to look for a government formed on this model among the ages of antiquity, we need not

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ſeek for it in the nations celebrated for their conqueſts or inventions; for though theſe may gratify the ambition and pride of man, they are not eſſential to his happineſs; but we are to look for it in that obſolete but only true hiſtory of human nature, the Bible, which, to thoſe that ſtill believe in God, holds out a perfect pattern of every relation of life, exemplified in the approved conduct of men whom God did not diſdain to call his friends, and whom he diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world by extraordinary marks of his favour. Such were Abraham in the Patriarchal age; Moſes, Joſhua, and others, under the Theocracy or immediate government of God; and David and Hezekiah under the monarchy of Judah.—The great principle of government which directed all thoſe great men, was the fear of God. ——They regarded God as their king.—They conſidered his ſervice as the chief labour which they, and the people under them, had to perform; and they had reſpect unto the recompence of reward which God hath prepared for good men in another life, as the great object of their ambition.—The divine will being thus their law, and the divine favour their reward, rulers exerciſed their authority over their people with juſtice and moderation; and their people, while they continued pious towards God, and loyal to their princes, were proſperous and happy, living in perfect ſecurity.

Par. Theſe were bleſſed times.—But even in thoſe days every nation did not enjoy that happy condition!

Cler. They did not; and it was owing to their government being conducted on wicked principles.—Except the choſen people of God, all the nations of the earth were idolaters.—Senſual pleaſure, by corrupting the faculties of the ſoul, and weaning them from ſpiritual exerciſes, leads people either to a total forgetfulneſs of God, or to ſuch conceptions of him as are groſs like itſelf. Hence ſenſuality will produce idolatry; and idolatry encourages ſenſual purſuits. It was therefore natural for rulers, when they were ignorant of God and of his will, to propoſe ſome other end of government to themſelves, than making their people happy through the medium of Religion.——They naturally gave way to thoſe paſſions which ruled in their own breaſts; and with the rulers in ancient times (a few only excepted) the gratification of thoſe paſſions was their chief aim, and the purſuits to which they led form the hiſtory of the nations they ruled.——Yet their extravagances were not the effect of government, but the abuſe of power.—They were owing to government being ſubverted; owing to that atheiſm, or impiety, or ignorance of God, which never fails to make rulers wicked, and their people miſerable.

Par. I wonder that God did not deſtroy ſuch tyrants!

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Cler. Sometimes they deſtroyed themſelves.—At other times they were cut off by their people.—On ſome occaſions their ambition proved their ruin, by throwing them into the power of other kings who were their enemies.——Yet theſe accidents did not remedy the evil.—For as long as rulers had no other principle to direct them than their own paſſions, they always governed ill; and it was only by their confining themſelves to piety, juſtice, moderation, and mercy, that they rendered their kingdoms flouriſhing, and their ſubjects happy.——Indeed, that piety or the fear of God is the only ſure foundation on which government can be built, is obvious from this; that republics were not better governed than kingdoms, ſo long as the paſſions of the people had the ſame ſway in the one, that the paſſions of kings had in the other.——Human nature is the ſame in all conditions of life; and a man who ſtiles himſelf a virtuous republican, is as great a tyrant to another republican, as any monarch ever was to his ſubjects. This is exemplified every day in France.——And it proves that no calamity can be ſo dreadful to any nation, as abſolute power in the hands of men whoſe conſciences are not enlightened and reſtrained by religion. Hence we alſo find that, though the antient republics of Athens and Rome are celebrated for their virtue, it was not ſuch virtue as could be commended on the principles of the goſpel, or ſuch as God would approve of; but it conſiſted of ſuch habits, produced in the people by political reſtraints, as enabled them more ſucceſsfully to vent their pride, their covetouſneſs and ambition upon other nations.—And even among themſelves, when diſengaged from foreign wars, they were continually playing the tyrant againſt one another, and diſcovering as little regard for juſtice and mercy as any tyrant that ever wore a crown.——Had it not been for ſevere laws and diſcipline, under which the people of thoſe republics were trained up in ſuch habits as made them more warlike than their neighbours, it would have been impoſſible, from their ſmall numbers, even to have defended themſelves againſt, much leſs to have defeated, large armies compoſed of men accuſtomed to pleaſure, and of the moſt effeminate manners.——Under no form of government therefore will we find that ſecurity for men's lives, their perſonal liberty, and their property, which God ſet apart for man as his birthright when he made him a ſocial creature, but where the will of God has been made the foundation for the laws by which thoſe ineſtimable privileges could be affected.—For this reaſon the government in heathen nations can never be propoſed as a juſt model for the government of any chriſtian nation. Even the Jewiſh nation, though furniſhed with laws framed by God himſelf, is to be conſidered

ſidered as no example to any other people, but in ſo far as both kings and people conſcientiouſly obeyed thoſe laws.—For there were times, when the Jewiſh government was as corrupt as that of any heathen nation, both king and people being groſs idolaters.——There were other times, when the people were expoſed to the ſeduction of men who proclaimed themſelves their *Friends*, and the champions of *liberty*, but who, under the ſpecious pretence of ſupporting the *Rights of the people*, wanted to overturn the government of their country, and to get the power into their own hands.——Such perſons are in holy ſcripture ſtiled *ſons of Belial*, that is, men impatient of controul, who would not ſubmit to the yoke of lawful government. Thoſe dangerous times happened either when *there was no King in Iſrael*, and therefore no perſon to put them to ſhame for their wickedneſs, ſo that *every man did what was right in his own eyes*; or when a king, through falſe tenderneſs to his ſubjects, did not cauſe the laws to be ſo vigorouſly executed as they ought to have been.—And this, when it happens in any kingdom, is a great misfortune, and muſt be owing to the art of governing being miſunderſtood, or greatly miſapplied.——For unleſs the laws are carefully executed, good ſubjects cannot be protected, and bad ſubjects, inſtead of being reclaimed by ſuch remiſſneſs, are encouraged in their wickedneſs, as well as increaſed in their number, from the impunity with which they are allowed to act.—It is much ſafer for the public intereſt and happineſs, and even more merciful to ignorant, unwary, or ill-diſpoſed perſons, to check miſchief with ſeverity at the beginning; becauſe as it prevents it from getting head, it ſaves thoſe from puniſhment, who might have been involved in guilt, had they not been deterred by the avenging ſword of juſtice.——And the lamentable events, which at times afflict moſt nations, ſhew us that no kingdom is ſafe from the machinations of the *ſons of Belial*, but by vigilance and activity on the part of its magiſtrates.

Par. Sir, I remember well to have read of ſuch men in the bible; and the manner in which God commanded them to be puniſhed, points out to us the abominable nature of *licentiouſneſs*, or *liberty* as the French would call it, and of the irreligion which is always connected with it, for the *ſons of Belial* were to be ſtoned to death. An't pleaſe your Reverence, if the propoſed reform was made in Parliament, would it not ſo purify our own government, as to bring it to the ſtandard of perfect government preſcribed by God in the holy ſcriptures?

Cler. The holy ſcriptures teach rulers to govern their ſubjects in juſtice, mercy, and the fear of God; uſing every proper means, by wiſe laws, and virtuous example, to impreſs their minds with a becoming ſenſe of religion; and protecting their lives, their perſonal

ſonal liberty and their property, from violence and injuſtice. Till it can be proved that the laws of Great Britain are unjuſt, or tending to impiety, and that ſuch impiety or injuſtice are the natural conſequence of ſome defect in the Conſtitution of the kingdom, there can be no good reaſon for making any innovation in it, even though the people had a right ſo to do, which they certainly have not, nor ever had.——And indeed, as it has often been confeſſed that the Britiſh Conſtitution is the beſt model of a perfect government to be found in the world, (the beſt proof of which is the ſingular proſperity and happineſs which, under the bleſſing of Almighty God, that Conſtitution has afforded for many ages to the inhabitants of this highly-favoured iſland,) it is much to be doubted whether any innovation in it would make things better, or rather there is a certainty that, in attempting ſuch melioration, we ſhould, like the dog in the fable, loſe the ſubſtance graſping at the ſhadow. Good laws, which undoubtedly are the immediate ſource of political happineſs, do not depend on the *number*, but on the *principles*, of the rulers of any nation; therefore, unleſs *one thouſand* members would, merely from their *greater number*, prove more juſt, or diſintereſted, in their legiſlative character, than *five hundred* members have done, ſuch increaſe might ſeem to alter very conſiderably the ſtate of the Houſe of Commons, but it would not meliorate the ſtate of the nation one whit.—If it be the corruption of that honourable houſe that ſtimulates our *Reformers* to promote a change in it; if the members of that houſe were, previous to their election, believed by their conſtituents to be proper perſons to repreſent them, and to be men of ſuch integrity, patriotiſm, knowledge and ability, that the lives, the liberty, and whole property of the kingdom might ſafely be confided to them, and yet have proved unworthy of the truſt; by what rule ſhall members hereafter be choſen, ſo as we may obtain men more juſt, more jealous of every encroachment on the national liberty, more vigilant and active in defending it, or more diſintereſted?——No ſuch rule can be laid down.——Electors muſt judge for themſelves, and act from their own diſcretion; and if all, or the greater part, of the Freeholders of Great Britain have been deceived, it is to be feared that very conſiderable body of men, who are the moſt opulent part of the nation, and a conſiderable part of whom have been well educated, and may be ſuppoſed to entertain as juſt ideas on political ſubjects as thoſe who are diſſatisfied with our excellent conſtitution, will not be much enlightened by having all the mechanics in the kingdom added to their number. If the Houſe of Commons be corrupted, I ſhould ſuppoſe its corruption to be

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like the leproſy, a diſeaſe paſt human remedy; and therefore inſtead of being an advantage to the nation, it would be downright madneſs, to increaſe a body which you and our other ſtate-phyſicians call corrupted, and whoſe corruption becomes dangerous only in proportion to its ſize and influence.

Par. If a reformation of the Houſe of Commons would not purify our government, how ſhall its abuſes be remedied?

Cler. My friend, the word *Reformation*, when applied to the change which reſtleſs men wiſh to make in parliament, is groſsly perverted.——*Reformation* ſignifies the reducing a thing to the ſtandard by which it was made, and with which it ought ever to agree, but from which it has by ſome means or other departed.—Now this cannot be ſaid to be the caſe with the Houſe of Commons, in the ſenſe our *Reformers* mean; becauſe, if it muſt be brought back to its antient ſtate, it would have an effect quite oppoſite to that which they wiſh to produce.—It would give the king more power, and the people leſs.—For the farther back we trace the hiſtory of the Houſe of Commons, we ſhall find it leſs and leſs poſſeſſed of that power, by which, for a century paſt, it has been able to controul the meaſures of government. At the Revolution in 1688, when mens minds were highly inflamed againſt the royal prerogative, and the abuſes it was ſuppoſed to have introduced into government, every exertion was made by the repreſentatives of the people, to ſecure every right to which either nature, or the Conſtitution of the kingdom, entitled them. Yet there were no ſuch rights ſtipulated, or thought of, as thoſe which the abettors of *Liberty and Equality* now wiſh to eſtabliſh; which certainly would have been done, had ſuch rights really exiſted; for politicians more ſhrewd, vigilant or active, will hardly be found in any age, than thoſe which flouriſhed at that memorable period.

Par. I have always heard the Revolution extolled as a moſt *glorious* revolution, and king William called our *immortal deliverer*, which would certainly be a waſte of good names, had the people's rights been forgotten or left inſecure, conſidering what expence they have coſt them.—But that I cannot allow myſelf to think.—Bleſs my heart! has the nation been blind to its own rights for theſe hundred years, while it has been calling itſelf moſt enlightened in all other reſpects? Or could thoſe rights be diſcovered by none but the dregs of the people? On what foundation, Sir, do the *Reformers* build their new plan of reformation? or what particular right or privilege do they chiefly inſiſt on? for to tell you the truth, though I was one of the number, I did not very well underſtand the buſineſs; and perhaps there are many others in the ſame condition.

Cler.

Cler. The great point which the *Reformers* wiſh to carry, is, to obtain an *univerſal ſuffrage*, or *general repreſentation* in the Houſe of Commons; that is, that every man come of age, or paying taxes, ſhall have a right to vote in the election of members of Parliament.——This it ſeems is claimed as a *natural* right, on the pretence that all power comes from the people, and that they have a right to model it as they pleaſe.——That power comes from the people can never be believed, till it can be proved that the Bible ſpeaks falſe, when it ſays, *There is no power but of* GOD. *The powers that be are* ORDAINED *of* GOD.—Nor can the original power of the people be admitted, till the hiſtory of all the nations of the earth be forgotten; for I have already ſhewn you, that never was there a nation wherein government did not exiſt as a primary eſtabliſhment eſſential to human happineſs, ſo that never was there a man born into the world, who did not find a government exiſting before himſelf, to which the providence of God bound him to yield obedience, and which he had no right to overturn or diſturb.—The *Reformers* therefore can claim no right to the repreſentation they ſpeak of, from any law of nature, or from the general deſign of government.——Should they plead it however as a right ariſing from the circumſtances under which our monarchy was formed, as if the Conſtitution of King and Parliament was framed by the wiſdom, and with the conſent, of the people; their claim would be as ill founded in this caſe as in the other.——It is well known that, from the moſt early period, Britain was governed by kings who were arbitrary like the kings of all other nations; and though the kingdom was ſeveral times invaded and conquered, which of courſe made many revolutions in its government, yet there was nothing like a Parliament, as it is now conſtituted of Peers and Commons, till long after the Norman conqueſt.——The king exiſted many ages before the Parliament, and made the Parliament; and therefore the people have no right to aſſume a power which they did not originally poſſeſs.—If the *Reformers* wiſh to eſtabliſh an arbitrary government, (and their proceedings ſeem to have that tendency) it would certainly be better to be ruled by an arbitrary *king*, than by an arbitrary *mob*.——The French principles are evidently what the *Reformers* have embraced; they diſtinguiſh one another by the title of *Citizen* prefixed to their names, as the French do; and in their clubs they pride themſelves in a cloſe imitation of the French Convention.——What then ought we to expect, were thoſe principles univerſally embraced, and the power of the *Reformers* equal to their wiſh, but to ſee the ſame atheiſm, murders and robberies in this country, that thoſe principles have produced in France?

Par,

Par. Would you wiſh, Sir, to ſee an arbitrary government eſtabliſhed in this kingdom?

Cler. God forbid!—When I ſpoke of an arbitrary government, I only meant, that ONE arbitrary ruler would be more tolerable than SEVERAL MILLIONS.—Human paſſions, when put in a ferment, are cruel maſters; and as they pay no regard to the dictates of religion or conſcience, which alone can guide or controul the will of an arbitrary ruler, it is happy for us that our lives, liberty and property are not left at the diſpoſal of a government reſting upon ſo precarious a foundation.—By a ſpecial kindneſs of divine providence to this nation, a form of government has been eſtabliſhed in it, which, according to the preſent ſtate of human nature, is more capable of preſerving and diſpenſing among us the bleſſings that can make a people happy, than any other ſort of government that can now be deviſed by human wiſdom.—By the preſent ſtate of our government, we are equally protected from the tyranny of a king, and from the madneſs and indiſcriminating cruelty of popular uſurpation.—Should a wicked king ever mount the throne of Great Britain, he could hardly prove a tyrant to his ſubjects; the laws having tied up his hands, and made his miniſters reſponſible with their lives for their maſter's political conduct.—Hence it is a maxim in law, *The king can do no wrong.*—We are equally out of the reach of popular tyranny, ſo long as the laws are properly executed, and the Houſe of Commons prevented from encroaching on the king's prerogative.——This ſhews us, and the experience of former times in our own country, as well as the daily enormities committed in France, prove that it is for the intereſt of the nation, if their lives, their perſonal liberty, and their property be dear to them, that the power of the Commons be not enlarged beyond the bounds which the Conſtitution, and the dear-bought wiſdom of our forefathers, have ſet to it.—The privilege of electing members for the Houſe of Commons, is indeed confined to a ſmall part of the people, when compared with the whole inhabitants of Great Britain; but were ſuch privilege extended to every man without diſtinction, it might more univerſally diffuſe thoſe habits of idleneſs, diſſipation and vice which are the reproach of every election; but it would not make the nation more free, virtuous or happy.——It would either gradually lead the people to acquire, and to exerciſe, an exorbitant power; which, in the hands of ignorant, headſtrong, lawleſs and wicked men, would be employed to the diſturbance and ruin of the peaceable and virtuous part of the community, and to the deſtruction of all government; or it would afford an opportunity to ſome ambiti-

ous and enterprising individual, to erect a tyranny of his own on the ruins of the liberty, security and happiness of his country.

Par. I think, Sir, you said that the king made the Parliament. How was it?

Cler. The king is lord paramount of the whole kingdom; and was considered at first as the proprietor of every foot of land it contained: and indeed was actually possessed of as much of it as enabled him to defray all the expences of his government, except in extraordinary cases, such as long foreign wars, which rendered it necessary to call for aid from his subjects.—It was to recompence the king for the loss of his hereditary revenues, that Parliament has, since the Revolution, granted an annual sum for supporting his government, under the name of the Civil List. —By grants from the crown after the Norman conquest, individuals obtained portions of land, some greater and some less, with certain dignities and privileges annexed to them.——The persons who obtained those grants were stiled barons, or lords, who parcelled out their lands on various conditions to other persons, who were called their vassals.—The barons were the king's counsellors, and his champions and commanders. In time of peace they assisted him with their advice; in time of war they fought his battles; and their vassals were brought into the field as soldiers.—This was the state of the government till a considerable time after the Norman conquest. In the 13th century, the king called the commons to the great council of the nation; which he did by sending writs to the different counties, requiring them to chuse and send the number of persons to represent them, which the writ prescribed. At that early period, cities and towns had no representation.——That privilege was bestowed on them afterwards at various times by the king, who granted them charters, and limited the number of members which each should elect.—The royal prerogative in these respects remains to this day. The duty of the Commons when called to Parliament was, from their first appointment, to advise the king in what manner to levy the public taxes, so as to be least burdensome to the subject; and, from their local knowledge, to point out such regulations as would be most conducive to the peace and prosperity of the kingdom.——The duty of those members was so far from being eagerly courted, or purchased, as it is now, that they would not serve without receiving wages from their constituents.——From the nature of its duty, of imposing the public taxes, the House of Commons came afterwards to be called the keeper of the people's purse; and as that invested it with great power, it was fit that only those persons should elect, or be elected,

ed, members of that Houſe, who were poſſeſſed of landed property to a conſiderable amount.——For it was wiſely conſidered as unjuſt, and dangerous to the public ſafety, to leave the property of the nation, by which alone it could be ſupported, at the mercy of people who had no property of their own to be affected by the taxes they might impoſe.——The ſame rule of repreſentation has continued to this day, and ought to continue, becauſe the reaſon on which it was founded is yet, and will ever be, equally ſtrong.——The land tax, and other taxes ariſing from the produce of the land, even when conſumed at home, though they do not defray the whole of the public expence, amount to a conſiderable part of it, and are the only ſource of revenue that can be called ſure and permanent.——For though much money is drawn from the imports and exports of the kingdom, it is of a nature equally precarious with the ſource from which it flows.——Trade is extremely fluctuating, and may decreaſe or totally fail; and manufactures, which maintain the balance of trade in our favour in other countries, are liable to ſo many unfavourable circumſtances, which often no human wiſdom can alter, that a government, ſupported merely by commercial revenue, is extremely vulnerable, and lies at the mercy of every other powerful ſtate.——But land remains a never-failing ſource of revenue, and, in this kingdom, may be conſidered as the only ſure pledge which the national creditors have for at leaſt the intereſt of their money; accordingly a vaſt proportion of the rents of England go towards defraying the public expence.——Beſides the inſtability of manufactures, they are attended with many other diſadvantages, which the nation ſome time or other muſt feel.——The far greater part of the hands they employ are taken from the country, where they might labour in the agricultural line, with as much benefit to themſelves and to the nation. In many caſes, I confeſs, they are driven from the country to ſeek ſubſiſtence in manufacturing towns, but that is owing to abuſes that will eaſily admit of a remedy.——Herding together in thoſe towns, they ſoon degenerate in their morals, they loſe their health, they much ſooner die, and they leave behind them, to ſtruggle with poverty and vice, a more ſcanty and more feeble offſpring, than if they had continued to live in the country, and to be occupied in its ſalutary and invigorating labours.——The general ignorance and vice which prevail in all manufacturing towns, prepare multitudes of men for the ſeducing arts of the ill-deſigning; and the firſt check given to their labours, and to their uſual means of diſſipation, renders them ripe for becoming the inſtruments of thoſe whoſe views are hoſtile to the peace and ſecurity of their country.——It is in ſuch places,

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and from ſuch perſons, that we are to look for danger; and the frequent, ſudden, and unexpected riots which they produce, are but too convincing proofs of the ſnares to which manufacturing ſervants are expoſed, of the ſubtle arts that are employed for their ſeduction, and of the urgent neceſſity for every lover of his country to uſe thoſe exertions, which the laws allow, and require him to uſe for the preſervation of the public tranquility.

Par. Can no remedy be found for thoſe evils?

Cler. No doubt there may; and we ought to rely on the vigilance and activity of adminiſtration, and on the wiſdom of the legiſlature, for taking ſuch meaſures as the ſtate of the kingdom requires.——Popular commotions, when a nation does not actually labour under oppreſſion, and is not excited by flagrant acts of injuſtice or cruelty to ſeek for relief, are frequently owing to one branch of national induſtry having overgrown by impoveriſhing others.——Perhaps this may juſtly be conſidered the relative ſtate of manufactures and of agriculture among ourſelves.——Manufactures, though generally believed to be of vaſt national utility, have had a great and natural tendency to weaken the exertions of the farmer, and to withdraw from the labours of the field, thoſe who might have much more beneficially been employed in the cultivation and improvement of thoſe large tracts of land, which all over the iſland are no better than barren and dreary waſtes.—— Was government to afford the ſame encouragement to agriculture which it has done to manufactures; and were gentlemen to divide their farms on a ſmaller ſcale, ſo as to throw them into more hands; and were they to ſettle their uncultivated lands on ſuch liberal terms as to give the ſettlers, or tenants, a reaſonable and permanent intereſt in them; it would be productive of both private and public advantage. It would greatly meliorate the eſtate of the land-holder, and add to his riches, as well as more univerſally beautify the kingdom.—— It would promote population, and produce a more healthy and vigorous race, than will ever be drawn from manufacturing towns; would have a happy influence on the morals of the people; would make the kingdom more ſecure from democratical politics, and the nation much more powerful; would put the revenue in a ſtate of progreſſive and ſteady improvement, and render it in time ſufficient to anſwer every exigence of government, without leaving the proſperity of the kingdom at the mercy of thoſe outward contingencies, to which manufactures and commerce are always expoſed. As land is the only real property within the kingdom, it is certainly the firſt and greateſt object that calls for the attention of the legiſlature; and therefore, beſides adopting every wiſe regulation

that

that can tend to its improvement, it would be a meaſure both juſt and expedient, ſhould the members of the Houſe of Commons ever be increaſed, to throw that additional weight into the ſcale of County repreſentation, becauſe ſuch members have moſt at ſtake, and from their independence are moſt likely to act from the pureſt motives.——But ſhould an alteration be made in the rule of repreſentation which has hitherto been obſerved, and a door be opened to every licentious demagogue, or needy adventurer, to get into the Houſe of Commons, we have reaſon to ſuſpect, from the ſpirit of the times, that we ſhould ſoon ſee parliament turned into a *National Convention*.——A ſhapeleſs embrio of it has lately been exhibited in Edinburgh, but the timely exertions of the magiſtrates have hid it from the public eye.——However, had the monſter been allowed to come to maturity, we ſhould no doubt have ſeen it imitate its French progenitor in its cruelty and rapacity, as the doughty reformers of Britiſh liberty have done the rulers of France in their fooliſh, frivolous, and puerile forms of buſineſs.

Par. Would not the conſtitution be greatly purer was the Houſe of Peers to be aboliſhed?

Cler. In point of law and of equity, the Peers have a prior right to the Commons to ſit in Parliament, the Houſe of Peers being the continuation of the antient aſſembly of barons; therefore, however numerous the king may make the Houſe of Commons, by encreaſing either the County or Corporate repreſentation; or whatever powers the Conſtitution may have given to that Houſe, it would have no more right to lay aſide the Houſe of Peers, than the younger children of a family to expel their eldeſt brother from the houſe of his father.——But in point of expedience it would be a meaſure the moſt ruinous to the national ſecurity and happineſs that could poſſibly be adopted; and accordingly it has never been propoſed but by perſons who aimed at the deſtruction of the kingdom.——The only time it was ever carried into execution, which was in the rebellion againſt King Charles the firſt, the abolition of the Houſe of Peers paved the way for one of the moſt arbitrary Governments that ever appeared in any country, by the tyranny of the ſeveral rulers that exerciſed the ſupreme power during that rebellion, and after the murder of the King. The Houſe of Peers, which, in the language of the *Belialiſts*, is ſtigmatized as a dead weight on the national liberty, is really an eſſential inſtrument in its preſervation.——The Britiſh Peers, though united to the Crown by their honours which they have derived from it, are not devoted to its will by that blind and ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion, which bends the nobles in thoſe countries, where all that they poſſeſs may be ſaid to depend

pend on the favour of their ſovereign; for they are ſo connected by their independent fortunes with the other branch of the legiſlature, that it is equally the intereſt of the Peers to unite with the Commons againſt the tyranny of a King, as it is to ſupport the King againſt the uſurpation of the Commons.——Therefore, by leaning to the one or to the other as circumſtances may require, the Peers muſt preſerve that equilibrium between the King and the Houſe of Commons, on which, as on a rock, the Conſtitution has wiſely founded the ſecurity which every man in the kingdom has for his life, his perſonal liberty and his property. And while that equilibrium is preſerved, we have nothing to fear from a wicked King, or from a Houſe of Commons aſpiring after the ſupreme power. Living under a Conſtitution ſo favourable to every individual, to the pooreſt as well as to the richeſt, and to the meaneſt ſubject as well as to the princes of the blood, he muſt be a very ignorant, a very fooliſh, a much miſguided, or an ill-deſigning man, who would wiſh to ſee it changed or brought into danger. We may be aſſured that no friend to the Conſtitution will make ſuch an attempt.—Such attempts however have been made, and are ſtill making, under the ſtale pretence of ſupporting the liberty of the people, but ſuch pretexts are too thinly covered not to be detected by every thinking perſon, however illiterate.—We may have too much, but certainly too little liberty is not at preſent a national grievance.

Par. I have ſo often heard the contrary, an't pleaſe your reverence, that I ſhould be glad to know if that really be the caſe. Have we not too little liberty?

Cler. I put this queſtion to you, my friend; Are you hindered from doing any thing that would be beneficial to yourſelf, or to any body elſe?

Par. No;—I can't ſay juſt at preſent if I am. I do not recollect any ſuch hindrance.

Cler. If you cannot at once ſay how you are oppreſſed, or in what reſpect your liberty is reſtrained, it is a pretty ſure ſign that you have little cauſe of complaint.—Pray would you be diſpoſed to murder or maim your neighbour? Or to rob him on the high way, or break into his houſe and ſteal his property? Or would you wiſh to be at liberty to defame him, ſo as to ruin his credit with the world?

Par. God forbid. I abhor all ſuch crimes; and I hope your reverence does not impute ſuch wicked deſigns to me.

Cler. My good neighbour, I do not impute ſuch things to you; but I aſk you if the reſtraining you from theſe wicked actions would be a real treſpaſs upon your liberty? becauſe if it would not,

not, you enjoy perfect liberty; for you are free to do every thing else.——Religion is with good men the object of greatest importance, and the free exercise of its duties their inestimable privilege.—This privilege you enjoy in its fullest extent.——If you are not inclined to join the established church, you may unite with any sect you please: and if there is none formed to your liking, the government leaves you at liberty to make one for yourself.——Your person is held so sacred by the laws, that even though you should be guilty of a crime, you cannot be imprisoned without having the cause explicitly assigned; and should you be thrown into jail, without any reason, the law does not only set you immediately at liberty, but inflicts punishment on those who deprived you of it. But if you are detained in prison to be tried for any crime, you are not punished at the will of any individual, or even of the king; nor are you tried privately by judges who may be corrupted, or overawed; but you are confronted with your accuser, and tried in the face of the world;—the law is fairly laid down by men of wisdom and unblemished integrity, who are made independent of both public and private influence, and your guilt must not only be clearly proved by credible witnesses, but positively affirmed by the verdict of twelve disinterested men whom it would almost be impossible to corrupt, and whose interest, if they have any in the matter, is to act with impartiality, because on the integrity of their verdict depends their own safety.——Should you be injured in your person, the same law that would have punished you when guilty, or acquitted you when falsely accused, would also avenge the injuries you had received.——The same protection is extended to you in the acquiring and enjoying of your property.——You may apply yourself to any occupation you please.—Your profits are your own; and you may employ them as you will, provided it be not to the prejudice of other men.—If you have acquired your fortune honestly, you are never reproached with the occupation you filled; for in Great Britain industry is encouraged, and a man is more or less honoured; and more or less useful to his country, in proportion to his diligence.——When you have acquired a competence, you are at liberty to retire from business, and live in the undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of your labours; and if you have the proper talents, the door of preferment is open to you, and you may rise to the highest offices and honours in the state.——For we have a powerful incentive to virtue and industry (which may be said to be peculiar to this country) in the favours which our gracious Sovereign has at all times bestowed on such of his subjects, as have distinguished themselves by their eminent service to the state

or by their ability and excellence in the profeſſion they have filled: while to every man in his dominions he affords, in his own perſon, the brighteſt pattern of piety and virtue that can adorn a human character.

Par. Is it not wonderful, Sir, that I ſhould ſeldom or never have thought of all this?—And yet all that you have now told me of our privileges is as plain as ſunſhine.—But the truth is, we have all been but too well, and did not know it.—— We have treated our bleſſed privileges as children do their play-things.—We have had them ſo long that we are tired of them; while all the world have been envying us, and ſome of our neighbours, I am afraid, wiſhing to take them from us.—Why there is not a nation in the world that can boaſt of privileges like ours.—In this country no man dare hurt his neighbour's perſon or reputation, or deprive him of his property to the value of a farthing. Even the king himſelf cannot take our money from us, though it be due to him, without having recourſe to the law like the meaneſt of his ſubjects. The law does every thing, and therefore a man knows what he has to truſt to. Odds my life! law is law, let them ſay what they will! Nor is it the law neither that does every thing. It is the manner in which it is adminiſtered. There is your jury again, as your reverence ſays. What ſhould we do without a jury? Had it not been for a jury, and an honeſt gentleman of a judge, I ſhould have been out of my farm lately by a rogue of a ſteward, who ſtirred up my landlord againſt me.—What ſhould a poor man like me have done againſt a great lord in any other country than this? Twelve honeſt neighbours were put on the jury, and the judge told them that the law knows no difference between a lord and a farmer, for Britiſh law is univerſal juſtice. Was not that honeſtly ſaid? What the dickens! the jury ſhewed my lord he had got the wrong ſow by the ear.

Cler. You feel it, I ſee, neighbour. When it comes home to yourſelf, you know the advantage of living under the protection of the law, and yet this was the great bulwark of our liberty that you wanted to deſtroy, by ſetting up *equality*. What condition ſhould we have been in by this time, had we embraced the curſed fraternity of the French, and followed their example?

Par. I did not know, not I, that *equality* would deſtroy the *law*, for I was told that every man would be able to protect himſelf, and that we ſhould be free from taxes. But now I ſee that without law and upright judges we ſhould become a prey to one another.—For if every man was to be at liberty, under the pretence of *equality*, to ſeize what he could, it would be a worſe ſtate than living in Turkey. Better to live under one tyrant who

reſides

reſides at a diſtance from us, than to have a tyrant in every man who lives at our door!—One might as well be in hell, as live on earth without government, for men would be devils to one another!

Cler. Yes.—This is proved by the miſeries brought on this country by civil wars in former times; and it is written in France every day in letters of blood, as a warning to other nations not to abandon themſelves to the *atheiſm, murders, cruelty, oppreſſion* and *robbery*, which the ſavage rulers of that calamitous country are hourly exerciſing, under the impudent pretence of making their country *happy*. When the French revolution was beginning, the leading men flattered the people that they ſhould enjoy religious and civil liberty in the greateſt purity.——This was a great temptation to a people who thought themſelves oppreſſed; and it had all the effect that was intended; for it made the people mad, and eager to execute the ſchemes their leaders formed under the plauſible pretext of promoting liberty.——What has been the fruits of thoſe ſchemes?—Inſtead of religious liberty, the Convention has aboliſhed religion altogether. They have declared themſelves atheiſts, and they are daily paſſing decrees to make the people ſo.——They have aboliſhed Sunday, the day on which all chriſtians have, during eighteen centuries, celebrated the reſtoration of the world to the moſt perfect freedom, freedom from the ſlavery of the devil, and from the power of Sin and Death, by the glorious victory and reſurrection of the ſon of God; and have made it a capital crime in any man who ſhall ſhew it reſpect, or refuſe to labour or traffic on that day. They have alſo ordered every means to be uſed to prevent the recollection of public worſhip, by any public act, or by purchaſing or uſing books of devotion. And to ſhew their ſpite againſt Chriſtianity, ſome of them have renounced their Chriſtian names, and taken the names of heathens, as being more honourable, they think, than thoſe given them at their baptiſm.——Some ſects are yet permitted to aſſemble in their places of worſhip; but no prieſt muſt dare to perform any of his functions in any place but his chapel; by which means dying perſons are deprived of what has always been conſidered, even among heathens, as their laſt and only comfort,—the aid of religion.—But this is acting conſiſtently.—For the French have erected a monument in ſome of their burial grounds, with this inſcription on it, *Death is eternal ſleep!!* whereby they reject the bleſſed hope of a reſurrection, believing that, when man dies, he ſinks into nothing, like the beaſts that periſh. Nay, not contented with eradicating, as far as poſſible, from the minds of the preſent generation, every veſtige of religion, and of reverence for the Su-

preme Being; the Convention have cauſed ſchools to be opened, where atheiſm is regularly taught to the riſing generation, ſo that *when they come up, they may teach their children the ſame.*—And what have already been the effects of ſuch inſtruction, think you?

Par. God knows! and I am almoſt afraid to aſk.

Cler. And I tremble while I tell it.—A few days ſince, a number of boys appeared at the bar of the Convention, as ambaſſadors from thoſe infernal ſeminaries, to give an account of the progreſs they had made in their new philoſophy, a word which has now been ſo ſufficiently branded with the mark of the beaſt, as to become deſervedly the deteſtation of every chriſtian.—But inſtead of uttering thoſe pure and pious ſentiments which religion would have taught them, and which the uſual innocence and ſimplicity of their tender years ought to have inſpired; inſtead of giving glory to the author of their exiſtence, the Father of mercies, and diſpenſer of all good, like thoſe *Babes and ſucklings, out of whoſe mouth* the divine grace *hath perfected his praiſe;* their ſpeaker declared that All religious worſhip had been ſuppreſſed among them,—even to the very idea of religion: and that he and his ſchool fellows—DETESTED GOD!!

Par. Good heavens! Is it not a wonder that God does not make the earth open its mouth, and ſwallow ſuch a nation at once?

Cler. In every nation, however ſinful, there are many good perſons, whom God will always regard when he brings his judgments upon ſinners. But without ſuch a general and inſtantaneous judgment as you ſpeak of, the end of divine juſtice will be ſufficiently anſwered, by giving up thoſe reprobates to their own devices.—They are daily cutting one another off; and there can be no doubt of their being all made, in their turn, a ſignal mark of the vengeance of heaven. A haſty-footed curſe purſues the whole band of thoſe deteſtable ruffians; for the ſudden tranſition which ſome of them are daily making from the pinnacle of power to the *guillotine,* and their having become a terror and a ſcourge to one another, prove that the heavy hand of omnipotence preſſeth them down to perdition—Great was the wickedneſs of the French nation, both in principles and practice, long before the revolution; and they are now brought to the furnace to be purified: God keep this country from needing ſuch a purification!——As the French people have been ſo miſerably deceived in point of religious liberty, their civil liberty has proved equally deluſive.—The French reformers thought they could not hold out a more powerful temptation to the people, than to promiſe them ſuch a conſtitution as ours; and the people thought they

ſhould

ſhould be happy, if a Frenchman was to enjoy the privileges of an Engliſhman.—But all thoſe fine expectations have vaniſhed into air.—No man is ſafe from the deadly ſuſpicion of the Jacobins and Convention, but is in hazard every moment of being torn from his family, and thrown into jail, which he has no chance of leaving, but to mount a ſcaffold.—His property is equally at the mercy of his rulers; and there cannot be a greater crime than to be poſſeſſed of any thing that may inflame their avarice. A rich man is accuſed of plotting againſt the ſtate. Immediately his head is lopped off, and his whole property confiſcated.—At firſt ſome laws were made for the protection of the people, but theſe are always found to be *inconvenient* for the rulers, and they are either repealed or ſuſpended; ſo that the French people are in a ſtate of ſlavery a thouſand times worſe, than ever they were in under the moſt arbitrary of their kings.—If the old government might have been ſaid to chaſtize the people with whips, the new rulers do it with *ſcorpions*; and the *little finger* of the Convention is *thicker than any king's loins*.—The debt which the Convention is contracting in order to ſupport themſelves, will in a few years, if the war ſhould continue ſo long, be ſo enormous, that it will be impoſſible to pay it; and the nation muſt for ever groan under the moſt intolerable taxes to pay the intereſt of it. For the expence incurring by the Convention, (unleſs when they can prevent it by pillaging the people) is about Seven Millions ſterling a month, or Eighty-four Millions a year, which in three years will be equal to the whole national debt of Great Britain, that has taken an hundred years to accumulate. But it is not ſolely the expence of the war that is now overwhelming France with ruin.—Its rulers are fattening on its ſpoils; and while the poor country people are compelled to fight half-naked, and half-famiſhed, the members of the Convention, and thoſe employed by them, are enriching themſelves by pillaging all the churches throughout the kingdom.—So that they who tell us that we ſhould be free from taxes by following the example of the French, are either groſsly ignorant of French affairs, or they muſt ſuppoſe the people of this country entirely void of underſtanding.—Revolutions are always in the end deſtructive to the kingdoms in which they happen; and never fail, in the mean time, to bring burdens on the people which, had ſuch revolutions not happened, they would not have had to bear.——It is becauſe the great body of the people do not underſtand this, or will not attend to it when they are informed, that ill-diſpoſed perſons inflame their minds with extravagant reports of a ruined country, and of taxes that are not to be paralleled in any other nation; when the truth is, notwithſtanding the

great

great debt we owe, no people on earth pay ſo few taxes in proportion to their trade and other advantages, or are ſo well able to pay them. Taking the national debt at 250 millions, it is no doubt a prodigious ſum of money, but it becomes greater and more terrible from our fears, than it really is; for by hearing it often repeated, many of the people come at laſt, by the force of imagination, to feel as uneaſy as if they had the whole weight of it on their own ſhoulders. The far greater part of the intereſt of this debt ariſes from taxes or duties, with which the majority of the nation have little concern; and ſuch part of the taxes as are levied from articles conſumed at home, affects ſo few of thoſe things that may be conſidered as neceſſaries to a poor man, that the meaneſt perſon in the country cannot really feel his ſhare of the public burdens.—The great weight of taxes on articles of conſumpt, ariſes from the tricks of thoſe through whoſe hands we receive them.—The people are rogues to one another; and when a man overcharges an article to his neighbour, he has the impudence to blame the government for his own impoſition; juſt like the innkeepers who, when a penny a bottle was laid ſome years ago on wine, very modeſtly raiſed a bottle from two ſhillings to half a crown.

Par. That's it, ſay I.—That's what I have often ſuſpected; and I believe your reverence has put the ſaddle on the right horſe. What the deuce! If we are cheated out of any thing, it is out of our ſenſes! Let us be as happy as we will, we dare not ſay it. We are ſo plagued and bamboozled with frightful ſtories in newſpapers and pamphlets, that I often do not know where I am.—I dare not believe my own eyes; and, o' my conſcience! I ſuppoſe we ſhall be convinced by and by that we are ridden like as many horſes, and that our galled ſides need plaiſters!

Cler. If you had ſeen this ſooner, it would have ſaved you much trouble.

Par. But, how could I? What with attending public and private meetings, hearing long and frightful ſpeeches, drinking whiſky-punch, reading late o' nights at pamphlets which were ſent me for nothing in ſhoals, and going about through the day retailing to my neighbours what I had read, as I was deſired to do, I had not time to cool. My brain was in a conſtant fever; and I was ſo taken up with the buſineſs of the nation, that my own buſineſs was completely at a ſtand! Heaven only knows where all this would have ended, had I not met with your reverence; but I am now completely undeceived.—I bleſs God, and ſhall do to my life's end, that the ſchemes that were hatching againſt this happy country have been defeated; and that I have eſcaped the ſnares

which

which would ſoon have proved my ruin.—For I am now convinced that thoſe who, with ſo much effrontery, call themſelves the "*Friends of the people*," are the people's greateſt enemies.—Let things be as bad as they will, I am ſure we ſhould not be better by a change.—If we are not happy, it is our own fault.—For my part, I ſhall always conſider that man as my enemy who tells me I am not free; for the greateſt nobleman in any other country on earth is not half ſo free as an Engliſh farmer.

Cler. My honeſt friend, your ſenſible obſervations give me ſincere delight, and I hope the juſt light in which you now view the ſtate of your country, and your own invaluable privileges, will have a due influence on your conduct, and induce you to diſcharge with faithfulneſs the duty you owe your king, and to pay reſpect to the laws of your country.—And this I have reaſon to expect, as you now underſtand on what authority that duty and this reſpect are founded.—All authority to govern in any nation muſt come from God; the King therefore is fitly ſtiled by St. Paul the MINISTER *of God, and a* REVENGER *to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.* Accordingly, while the ſupreme ruler in every kingdom is veſted with divine authority to check and puniſh wickedneſs in the people, the government of every nation is made a bleſſing or a curſe by the Ruler of the univerſe, according to the greater or leſs regard which a nation pays to His will.—Hence it will be found that if a nation in general fears God, and exerciſes itſelf in virtue, the Almighty will make its government conduce to its proſperity and happineſs; but if the nation gives itſelf up to vice and impiety, God will make its government, like famine or the peſtilence, a moſt ſevere ſcourge to it, till repentance ſhall have fitted it for mercy, and for a milder diſpenſation.—I feel not myſelf diſpoſed to boaſt of the piety and virtue of my country, for God knows both are highly imperfect; but I hope that the Almighty has eſpied this iſland, as he formerly did Canaan, as a ſpot in which he can take delight, and has therefore given us a government which, of all others that ever were in the world, comes neareſt in its principles to the Theocratical Government of the Jews.—But, inſtead of making us vain, it ought to render us grateful to the beneficent Giver, and doubly cautious that we abuſe not the precious gift.—For if we ſhould wax wanton under the indulgence of heaven, and give ourſelves up to vice, licentiouſneſs and infidelity, God can eaſily turn our *mild* and *equitable* Government into *Deſpotiſm*, and make that Deſpotiſm end in a *National Convention*, the loweſt abyſs of national wretchedneſs.—For that reaſon we ought at all times to look up to God as our Ruler; and becauſe the King is veſted with His authority, as His

vice-gerent, the apoſtle informs us that *we muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for* CONSCIENCE SAKE.—Therefore at all times, whether it may *appear* for your intereſt or not, it is your *duty* to ſubmit to the authority which God hath thus delegated to the ſupreme ruler of your country.—But your duty can never be *againſt* your intereſt; becauſe though it may ſometimes ſubject you to inconveniencies or loſſes in this life, (and for which our bleſſed Saviour has warned all his followers to prepare) it will promote your intereſt in that ſtate, where the paſſions of men can have no influence, and where God will reward you a thouſand-fold for the ſufferings in your perſon, or property, to which a ſtate of probation muſt often neceſſarily expoſe you.——Go home then, my good neighbour, and employ yourſelf, not in ſettling the affairs of this kingdom, or of any other kingdom on earth, but in managing your own private affairs with honeſty and prudence, and in endeavouring, by *honouring all men*, (ſhewing to each the reſpect or condeſcenſion, ſuited to the high or low eſtate in which the divine providence hath placed him); *loving the brotherhood*, (thoſe who confeſs the name of *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,*) and by *fearing God and honouring the king*, to ſecure to yourſelf a place in the kingdom of Him, who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the ONLY RULER of PRINCES; the ſerious preparation for which *pure, ſpiritual and eternal* ſtate, would abate that pride, covetouſneſs and ambition, which give riſe to all the revolutions that convulſe and deſtroy the kingdoms of the world.

THE END.